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# An exploration of Arab stereotypes during the Gulf Crisis.

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**AN EXPLORATION OF ARAB STEREOTYPES DURING THE GULF CRISIS**

by

Andrew W. Matthews

A Thesis

Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research  
Through the Department of Sociology and Anthropology  
in Partial Fulfilment  
of the Requirements for the degree of  
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at the University of Windsor

Windsor, Ontario, Canada  
1992

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## ABSTRACT

This thesis deals with the popular stereotypes of Arabs in the mass media. Drawing on previous scholarship in this area, it can be said that these popular portrayals have almost invariably been unfavourable. Arab males appear as oil sheikhs or terrorists, while Arab women are subservient bundles of black cloth. Where do these portrayals come from? These images are considered to be stereotypical. This thesis examines the editorial and feature articles of the New York Times for the period of the Persian Gulf crisis (Aug. 2, 1990 to Jan. 15, 1991), in order to determine (a) the types and nature of stereotypes associated with the Arabs and (b) whether the U.S. print media have become more balanced (less stereotypical) than before. A thematic analysis is used to detect patterns in the reporting about Arabs. In the final analysis, the Times showed relatively good balance in reporting on Arabs and their affairs, which serves to challenge popular stereotypes from previous media sources.

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## INTRODUCTION

As a result of the way international events are covered in the news, negative stereotypes are activated or perpetuated about certain ethnic minorities. These stereotypes are the foundations of prejudice and racism. Due to the "anti-Western" values that supposedly exist in the many Arab countries, people of Arab descent have always been favourite targets of the media. The recent war in the Persian Gulf has given rise to more sensationalized, unfair and inaccurate reporting about the Arab world and its people. These media practices reflect either a lack of knowledge on the part of the journalists and media executives, or an intentional distortion or manipulation of facts. The effects of this uninformed reporting have been disastrous, as the public has been presented with a one-sided, undesirable and most importantly, unacceptable picture of the Arab person. There is no greater villain, no more despicable rogue than the Arab as presented by Western media. This stereotypical characterization of the Arab has been prevalent in the literature since the time of the Byzantines (Suleiman, 1988), and continues to appear throughout the mass media today (Shaheen, 1984, 1988, 1990). These stereotypes promote and reinforce prejudice and racism, which serve only to tear a society apart, rather than unify it.



## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

This research seeks to identify the prevalence of Arab stereotypes for the duration of the Persian Gulf crisis. The purpose of this research is twofold. First: to recognize and identify the types and nature of the stereotypes associated with Arabs. Second: to determine if the U.S. print media has become more balanced, that is, less stereotypical, in its coverage of crises involving Arabs. What are the predominant portrayals of Arabs in the media? According to Shaheen:

Arab males are billionaires and bombers. They are corrupt, dimwitted, sneaky, hook nosed, obese, oily and oversexed. Only two basic categories exist: wealthy sheikhs and grotesque, seething-at-the-mouth terrorists. Arab women fare little better. They appear as obese belly dancers or as chattel-mindless harem maidens or silent bundles of black cloth who carry jugs on their heads as they trek across the desert behind camels (Shaheen, 1990: B1).

Although other ethnic groups have made progress in ensuring that they are positively portrayed in the media, Arabs are still subject to harmful stereotyping (Jones, 1991). Janice Terry (1973) studied feature and editorial articles in American newspapers before, during and after the October War of 1973 and found that they tended to favour Israel, were more crisis oriented and emphasized the blackmail nature of a possible Arab oil embargo (Terry, 1973). This study shall examine the feature and editorial articles in The New York Times for the period of the Persian Gulf crisis. Suleiman (1974) noted a move toward greater balance in Western news

magazines, but it has yet to be determined whether newspapers have similarly improved.

#### DEFINITION OF STEREOTYPE

In order to discuss the problem, it is necessary to define the term stereotype. According to Ehrlich, "the cognitive dimensions of prejudice have been traditionally subsumed under the singular label of stereotypes" (Ehrlich, 1973: 20). Stereotypes are a set of beliefs and/or disbeliefs about any group of people, Arab people for the purpose of this study. Ehrlich defines stereotypical behaviour and the more conventional stereotyping as terms that refer to the structuring of the elements of belief statements about groups of people (Ehrlich, 1973). In its development over the years, stereotyping has assumed a decidedly negative role, although there are those who argue that stereotyping other groups actually increases solidarity and strengthens intra-group relations in the group doing the stereotyping. Even if this is true, we cannot overlook the negative and harmful effects that stereotyping has, and the consequences for ethnic relations in the future. Historically the development and perpetuation of stereotypes have been viewed as a consequence of three classes of processes (Ashmore and Del Boca, 1981 as cited in Hamilton and Trolie, 1986). They are as follows:

One of these approaches has emphasized the role of the motivational processes, in which stereotypes are viewed as serving the intrapsychic needs of the perceiver. From this perspective, perceiving

members of minority groups in maintaining one's self esteem and in coping with feelings of self inadequacy. A second orientation, the sociocultural one has focused on the role of social learning processes by which stereotypic beliefs are acquired through socialization media influences, and the like, and are maintained by social reinforcements obtained from significant others and important reference groups. The third approach has sought to understand the role of cognitive structures and processes in the development of our conceptions of social groups and their effects on information processing and interpersonal behaviour (Hamilton and Trolie, 1986: 127).

This quote explains the different factors involved in the learning of stereotypes. For this study, the emphasis is placed on the sociocultural orientation, because of its focus on the media as a source of stereotypic representations.

#### LITERATURE REVIEW

The following review of the literature seeks to identify the reasons that the Arabs are cast in such an unfavourable light. Again, there is virtually complete consensus among the authors as to the factors underlying the presence of these stereotypes. One of the most common themes uncovered is that of a pro-Israeli bias in the U.S. media. It is not my intention to study the Arab-Israeli conflict, nor to offer any advice on the resolution of this conflict, nor am I taking sides in this matter. For the purposes of this research, however, Israeli and U.S. interests have been identified as having a major influence on the media's depiction of the Arabs, and that the European press has been much more balanced in its reporting of this conflict (Terry, 1979).

Arab-U.S. relations have been the focal point of much research done by Dr. Michael Suleiman. He asserts that "there is no question that among Americans there is a mindset, a general picture of Arabs, which, though vague, is distorted incorrect and, almost invariably negative, at times bordering on racist" (Suleiman, 1961, cited in Suleiman, 1988). S. leiman notes that many people have blamed this situation on Zionists and their supporters who are interested in defending Israel and advancing her cause at the expense of the Arabs (Suleiman, 1988). Ibrahim (1986) blames the foreign policy practices of the U.S. for the distorted portrayals of Arabs in the media. He argues:

Countries determine what their national interests are and which states are likely allies and which ones are likely or real enemies. Once a country identifies and categorizes states on this basis then its leaders develop a basic orientation of friendliness or hostility toward the countries so identified. Friends are then perceived as having generally positive and favourable characteristics whereas enemies are assigned negative stereotypes. One may conclude from this argument, therefore, that Arabs or Arabism are viewed by the U.S. as clear and definite threats to its interests in the Middle East hence the negative reporting and resultant information distortion and stereotyping (Ibrahim, 1986 cited in Suleiman, 1988: 252).

These two factors "are not mutually exclusive, and there is definitely a feedback process whereby a change in perception for instance, might also influence policy to some extent" (Stevens, 1974 cited in Suleiman, 1988: 252). In addition, most Americans don't distinguish between Arabs, Turks and Iranians. Consequently, when the States are at odds with any

Middle Eastern country, the resultant antagonism and negative stereotyping are quickly transferred to Arabs in general (Suleiman, 1988). Arab merchants in the United States and Canada received death threats and had their businesses vandalized during the Persian Gulf conflict, even though Iraq, Yemen and Jordan were the only Arab countries that opposed U.S. intervention. Egypt, Syria, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait were all important members of the U.S. led coalition, but since America was at war with "the Arabs", this meant that all Arab nations were subsumed into one hostile category. Similarly, there is a lack of distinction between Arabs and Muslims. The general belief is that the two terms are synonymous, and, therefore, any negative reporting about Islam (which is seen as a threat towards Judaism and Christianity) automatically tarnishes the Arabs (Suleiman 1988).

In the U.S., support of Zionism became acceptable partly because it was presented as a humanitarian project to aid destitute refugees and displaced persons - the remnants of European Jewry which had suffered persecution over the centuries at the hands of Christian nations. Suleiman argues that the U.S. could rid itself of guilt through the creation of a Jewish state. The Jews suffered the worst form of persecution - attempted genocide at the hands of the Nazis, and those who managed to escape were refused entry into some non-European nations, such as Canada and the U.S. Certainly there was a need to help these people, and that was done with

the creation of the state of Israel in 1948. The ambitions of the Zionist movement, championed by Theodore Herzl, included establishing a Jewish state in Palestine. Hence, the creation of the state of Israel was at the expense of another people, the Palestinians, who were deprived of a homeland as the needy Jews were granted one. As mentioned before, it is not within the framework of this research to discuss the rights and wrongs of this situation. Both Jews and Arabs are Semitic peoples, so this research must not be interpreted as being anti-Semitic (i.e. anti-Jewish). The very topic being studied may raise such feelings, but the policies of both the United States and Israeli governments, as well as the Western media, and how they affect the portrayals of Arabs in the media are the sole focus of this research, not the people of any religious denomination, nor the citizens of any country in any sense of the imagination. This is not the work of an 'anti-Israeli Jew-hater' nor an 'Arab-lover'. With this topic, however, the role of both the United States and Israel, as well as the European nations must be discussed.

According to Suleiman "in the 1950's, the U.S. was beginning its role as the major Western power in the Middle East and the foremost defender of a strategic region made enormously more important with the discovery of the largest reserves of oil and gas in the world" (Suleiman, 1988: 254). A renewed sense of Arab nationalism was placing great pressure on the leaders of Arab nations to implement policies that

would result in sweeping change across the Arab world (Suleiman, 1988). As a result of both occurrences in the region, Zionist attempts to make inroads in the United States found an atmosphere that was conducive to its purpose, almost as much as it was hostile to the proponents of Arab nationalism (Suleiman, 1988). The Zionists were searching (and understandably so) for any sort of support from the U.S., because of concerns for National security in the region. The leaders of any country must act in the best interest of the people of that country by ensuring national security. The important point coming from all of this, is that, in the Middle East, the U.S. did support, and continues to support Israel, although presently the level of support may be somewhat diminished as the U.S. tries to be a peace broker in the region. A discussion about whether this is right or wrong is not the concern of this research. What is important is that the bias definitely does exist, and that it is working against the Arabs. There has clearly been a pro-Israeli bias in almost all forms of U.S. media which has had the effect of showing Arabs as being unacceptable people.

The problem goes back much further than 1948, however. The Byzantines viewed Arab tribes as both nomadic and barbaric, unreliable allies who worshipped pagan gods (Suleiman, 1988). The practice of human sacrifice was falsely attributed to them, their dress and way of life were viewed as primitive, and their morals, especially in sexual matters were

condemned (Christides, 1970 cited in Suleiman, 1988). These Byzantine views filtered through to Europe and constituted part of the western image of the Arabs at the time of the rise of Islam (Suleiman, 1988). Eventually, these images found their way to the American colonies of the early 1700's. According to Wann (1915):

This medieval Western picture of Muslims/Arabs was later inherited by the inhabitants of the American colonies, with an attempt to discredit Islam by trying to discredit its founder. Exceptional cruelty and savagery were traits attributed to them. In fact, western literature reflected such attitudes. For example, the main themes represented in Elizabethan literature about the Orient (Muslim) were: war, conquest fratricide, treachery and lust (Wann, 1915 cited in Suleiman 1988: 257).

The Americans inherited this image of the Arab from Western Europe, but according to Suleiman, other specifically American ingredients were added. One of these is seeing the Bible as a literal interpretation of what happened in the Middle East. In the Old Testament, Arabs are seen as a continual threat to Hebrews. In addition, many colonial Americans, like the Puritans, tended to identify with the ancient Hebrews in that both were pioneers of new land. There is also the idea of Savagism where Arabs were equated with the "uncivilized" American Indians. Finally there is the ideology of Mission, meaning that missionary reports from the Middle East which blurred the distinction between Muslims and Christians and viewed them both negatively were taken to be statements of fact in America (Kearney, 1976 cited in Suleiman, 1988).



Suleiman's article concludes with a discussion of the modern day stereotypes of Arabs in the media, with the conclusion that the communications media have generally portrayed the Arab in negative terms. In biblical and political films Arab and Jew are presented in conflict and the Jew is continually favoured over the Arab (Suleiman, 1988). According to Nasir (1962), media portrayals of Arabs feature sex and violence as dominant themes, and Arabs are portrayed as dangerous, and their values viewed as immoral (Nasir, 1962 cited in Suleiman, 1988: 259). Similar themes developed often with "fanciful and fantastic plots about Arab wealth and petrodollars endangering Western economies and about alleged Arab schemes to steal, develop or somehow use nuclear weapons to endanger or even destroy Western civilization" (Suleiman, 1988: 259). It is interesting here to note the media's manipulative portrayal of the strength of the Iraqi army and its supposed arsenal of dangerous nuclear and chemical weapons which could not be left unchecked. Of course, none of these weapons ever materialized in a conflict which pitted the latest in technology against a numerically large but hopelessly outdated Iraqi armed forces. One year later, it has become known that there were only about 260 000 Iraqi troops involved, rather than the 540 000 estimated by U.S. intelligence (Sackur, 1992). The media did its job in perpetuating the myth of the Arab's desire for war and conquest, and the public was satisfied that this Arab menace (namely, Saddam Hussein) had to be stopped before he

took over the world. In summary, then, Suleiman identifies the rise of Zionism, the conflict over Palestine, the advancement of imperialist and colonial interests as well as Arab naivete in public relations and international politics as the main contributors to the negative stereotypes of Arabs presented in the American media (Suleiman, 1988).

In his book, Split Vision (1977: 29), Edmund Ghareeb identifies five major reasons for the media's failure to cover the Middle East fairly and objectively. They are as follows:

- 1) a cultural bias
- 2) a "think alike" atmosphere in the impact media
- 3) the Arab-Israeli conflict
- 4) media ignorance of the origins and history of the conflict
- 5) a powerful Jewish lobby in the U.S.

Ghareeb's interviews with media personnel confirm the Israeli bias in the media, and the Arab-Israeli conflict is acknowledged as having a significant effect on media reporting (Ghareeb, 1977). Since the Arab world bears little resemblance to the Western world, it is viewed as a strange almost mythical land. Vann Gordon Sauter, former executive Vice President of Broadcast Standards at CBS believes that stereotypes of Arabs exist because the "Arab world is considered dramatic and mysterious (an illusion heightened by years of misrepresentation of one form or another in all the mass media) and thus is drawn upon for a fictional source of material" (Sauter, quoted in Shaheen, 1984: 114).

Edward Said's discussion of Orientalism should be included here. Said identifies many articles by contemporary

Orientalists (those who write about the Arab world) and finds many astonishing statements. Daniel Halpern reported that even though all human thought processes can be reduced to eight, the Islamic mind is capable of only four (Halpern, 1973 cited in Said, 1974). Morroe Berger argues that since the Arabic language is much given to rhetoric, Arabs are consequently incapable of true thought. (Berger, 1967 cited in Said, 1974). It seems rather odd that such a statement could be made about the descendants of a land that gave us the alphabet, writing, agriculture and the three major monotheistic religions (Jones, 1991). The consensus is that if they think at all, Arabs think differently, not necessarily with reason, and often without it. (Said, 1974). Shuraydi (1981) comments on the phenomenon of Orientalism which typically characterizes the Arab as a nomad, both behaviourally and psychologically (Shuraydi, 1981).

In this nomadic state of being:

His major preoccupation is to satisfy his uncontrollable sex drives. His primitive way of thinking has impeded his cultural transformation beyond his tent, his camel, his harem, and more recently, his oil well. His mind functions in a non-logical, non-rational, unpredictable and suspicion arousing manner, a "fact" which makes it very difficult, if not impossible, to deal with (Shuraydi, 1981:24).

This is similar to the "finding" of Abdel Daher's study entitled "Current Trends in Arab Intellectual Thought". Daher finds that the concrete problem solving approach is conspicuously absent from Arab thought, and that the only way

that Arabs count is sexually, because institutionally politically and culturally they are insignificant. (Daher 1969, cited in Said, 1974) Said (1974) argues that Orientalism creates the Arab's mythical world for him, and that in this world the Arab is a sign for dumbness combined with hopeless overarticulateness, impotence with hypersexuality and poverty with excess. According to Said Orientalism governs Israeli policy toward the Arab, and that the Orientalist myth has reduced the Arab to a simple concept of tent and tribe. (Said, 1974) Said argues that "instead of seeing a whole web of Arab societies, cultures, realities, the myth volunteers one key to all mysteries and says: "This is all the Arab really is; do not be misled by his apparent modernity; it all comes down to tent and tribe. His temperament and character, now and always are as follows...." (Said, 1974: 90). Indeed, as Suleiman (1988) points out, it was easy for Britain and France to use Arab "backwardness" as an excuse to implant themselves as masters of the region. Orientalism has provided the world with the myth that the Arab is indeed a backward and uncivilized person.

In an earlier article by Suleiman (1974) he suggests that Israel has been greatly successful in its efforts to persuade Westerners to view the Middle East and its peoples through Israeli eyes. He notes the Israeli policy of trying to outnumber the enemy wherever possible (Israel has one of the most formidable armed forces in the world, with nuclear

weapons and a skill level that is second to none) then after victory, to use extensive propaganda of a David vs. Goliath nature, in which the underdog wins. The attempt is at persuading Western powers to accept the Israeli view of the nature of the problem in the Middle East. According to this view, the basic question is one of Arab refugees and Israeli security, with every other issue being ancillary or peripheral or artificial. (Suleiman, 1974) During the delicate periods following the creation of Israel, and to this day, Suleiman (1974) contends that "the Israelis have managed to prevent any changes in the status quo except those that might advance Israeli interests."

Said's discussion of Orientalism speaks of "myths" that are perpetuated by Orientalists. Suleiman (1974) notes that the U.S., by accepting the Israeli view of the Middle East found themselves formulating policies based on erroneous assumptions (myths). During the October War, many of these myths were shattered as it was discovered that the Arabs could fight, and were not as mindless as was originally believed. Suleiman (1974) states that it is unfortunate that these shattered myths have not been completely removed from the consciousness, or more appropriately, subconscious of Western journalists and policymakers. The American press coverage of the October War featured emphasis on the Arabs starting the attack, which is not usually viewed as unusual. Magazines either ignored or muddled the issue of who actually started

the attack. Suleiman's point is that if who strikes the first blow is important enough to report and emphasize, then this should have been done in both instances (Suleiman, 1974)

Suleiman (1974) did discover a move toward greater balance in the American media beginning in 1973. They have generally ceased to associate Arabs with nomadic living, a low level of education, etc. However, the erosion of pro-Israeli bias has not led to Arab gain. Instead, and quite properly notes Suleiman, the media have shifted to a more neutral balanced stance on Middle East Issues. This shift "occurred largely as a result of unexpected Arab performance in the October War which caused the West in general, as well as Israel, to carry out an agonizing reappraisal of the situation (Suleiman, 1974: 34).

In summary, the literature specific to stereotyping of Arabs in the media leaves little doubt about the sources of these stereotypes. Arabs have been stereotyped throughout history, and these practices continue today. The nature of the U.S. involvement (namely, support of Israel) in the Middle East is a major factor in the persistence of negative stereotypes of Arabs. Also, because Arabs and Islam are seen to be threats to the Western way of life, they are portrayed as such in the media. We have already seen how stereotypes are formed and remembered by human beings as described by social learning theory, so it is clear that negative stereotypes of Arabs, present in the media for a number of

reasons, will be applied to real life Arab peoples, often with negative consequences.

#### HOW STEREOTYPES ARE LEARNED BY HUMAN BEINGS

The literature that I have reviewed on the subject of stereotyping in the media features a high degree of consensus on the effects of stereotyping on viewers. However, "while virtually all observers agree that mass media convey social messages, behavioural scientists have been unable to identify precisely how audiences receive, distil and believe such messages" (Miller and Woll, 1987: 3). Scholarship on imagery in film and television has been inextricably bound up with mass media's effect on the audience, the connection stemming largely from society's recognition that the mass media can and do influence behaviour, especially that of children. (Miller and Woll, 1987) From the preceding theoretical discussion, we can see how social learning theory explains how stereotypes are formed in people's minds. Miller and Woll outline the history of the film industry and the cultural power it has held from its inception in the 1920's. Moreover, Miller and Woll cite studies done in the 1920's and 30's which showed that "movies shaped young viewers' attitudes, influenced their play provided them with information and formed stereotypes in their minds" (Miller and Woll, 1987:3). Graves' research does not examine the attitude changes after repeated viewings, but the information on repetition and reinforcement suggests that

negative attitudes become more deeply ingrained in the mind with repeated exposure.

This is in agreement with the finding of Mahoney (1974) discussed earlier that suggests that once beliefs are formed considerable contrary evidence is required before they are altered. In regards to recall ability, Rothbart, Evans and Fulero (1979) found that subjects have superior recall for behavioural events that confirm prior expectancies, but provide no evidence of heightened recall for disconfirming instances. In addition, we discover that Rothbart et al. (1979) report that the recall ability of subjects increases markedly through cumulative stimuli. Repetition and reinforcement are important because "the likelihood that a given category label will be activated, then, will certainly depend on the relative and absolute number of category instances" (Rothbart, Evans and Fulero, 1979: 353). Again because the media features a single, consistent view of reality, the importance of repetition cannot be overlooked. Along these lines, Massad, Hubbard and Newtonson (1978: 513) found that "observers may differ in their initial perception of an event as the result of differences in prior expectations, and that the resulting biased sample of information they acquire may limit their retrospective reinterpretation of the event". The mass media can provide this biased information, which has an effect on the person's later recall of that information for use in analyzing a



current situation.

More recent work by Skowronski and Carlston (1989) suggests that when we form an impression of an individual, we typically place greater weight on negative cues than on positive cues. Coovert and Reeder (1989) describe Unit formation and Schematic Expectations, which are similar to the prototypes discussed earlier. Unit formation has occurred when the target of the impression is perceived as an entity (Campbell, 1958 cited in Coovert and Reeder, 1989). To the extent that such "entitating" is present, observers will come to expect a particular pattern of behaviour for the target based on the observers notion of what the entity should be like (Coovert and Reeder, 1989) If the entity has been shown in the past to behave negatively, then present and future unit formation (i.e. the Arab as an entity) will expect this negative behaviour.

The media also affects the way we perceive and "code" faces. According to a 1989 study by Hill et al., human beings' perceptions of others, based solely upon the other's face, proceed gradually in a biased, self perpetuating manner that is, in the absence of any further objectively supportive evidence. Their experiment also demonstrated that "there are processes that can initiate the development of encoding biases through only a few exposures to instances that follow an entirely incidental covariation. (e.g. "professors with long faces are fair")" (Hill et al., 1989: 367) Again, here we see

that only a single exposure is necessary to generate bias, as was originally proposed by Peterson and Thurstone (1933). Also, this is another reference to the importance of contrary evidence in dispelling stereotypes, similar to those previously mentioned in Mahoney (1974) and Rosenthal and Siegel (1959). However, the work of Shaheen (1984, 1989, 1990), Ghareeb (1977), Miller and Woll (1987) to name a few clearly demonstrates that this information has never been present in any form of Western media.

Hamilton and Troler (1986) summarize some recent findings on the cognitive origins of social categories. They assert that it "is important that we recognize that the basis for all stereotyping is the differential perception of groups" (Hamilton and Troler, 1986: 134). They note that stereotypes can be said to exist when differential beliefs and values become associated with the differentiated social categories developed by the perceiver (Hamilton and Troler 1986). It follows then "that any psychological process that contributes to or results in the observer perceiving some persons as different from others would qualify as constituting a potential basis for the development of stereotypic contents" (Hamilton and Troler, 1986: 136). Their article continues citing research that has shown that the distinctiveness of certain informational cues can result in differential perceptions of groups. The distinctiveness of a stimulus can be based on several different factors, but the end result is

that distinctive stimuli will receive differential attention from the perceiver (McArthur, 1981, cited in Hamilton and Trolie, 1986). For example, "for the racially prejudiced individual, a black person's race may always constitute a salient stimulus and hence become the focus of the perceiver's attention" (Hamilton and Trolie, 1986: 137). Thus, any sort of stimulus which distinguishes the minority person from the Western person, will be recognized by the perceiver as a difference, and may form the base for stereotypes. The media is consistently portraying Arabs in a distinct, negative, non Western fashion, which constitutes a distinct, recognizable stimulus which, as mentioned before, can constitute a base for stereotypes. Jerry Mander insists that "media images replace or displace real images of foreign people and places" (Mander 1978, cited in Miller and Woll, 1987:13). Steve Bell of ABC news argues that the choice of a villain in media is "dependent to a great degree on the headlines events that attract public interest, and the villain of the hour in America has changed quite frequently" (Bell as cited in Shaheen, 1984:11). Bell's point is easily understood if we consider which ethnic groups are the targets of media bashing and the times at which they occur. For example, during World War Two, the Germans and Japanese were constantly humiliated in American media, the Russians were seen as the villains during the Cold War, and the Arabs have been the culprit on more than one occasion, most recently the Persian Gulf

conflict.

### THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

People are not born with prejudiced and racist emotions and feelings, but it does appear that they are born with a tendency to store information stereotypical in nature. However, prejudice and racism are learned from other sources. Primary school children have an astonishingly well developed set of ethnic beliefs (Cortes, 1979). Something happens that changes a person's perception of other ethnic groups. It almost undeniably results in negative attitudes and feelings toward members of these groups. This "something" is exposure to negative stereotypes in the mass media. There is perhaps no better example of the power that the mass media hold in shaping public beliefs and attitudes than is displayed in the process of learning and believing stereotypes.

This research shall use learning theory as its theoretical framework. This theory is especially well suited to this work because of its emphasis on the human processes of remembering and forgetting verbal material- and later of visual and auditory material - processing of information perception, imaging, formation and identification of concepts; in short, the entire system by which we learn things (Amsel 1989). It is the most appropriate theory to utilize because it helps to explain the powerful influence that the mass media can have on people's attitudes. It will also provide a strong

base for assessing the claim of Carlos Cortes that "before many children reach school they will have developed well formed attitudes about ethnic groups, including stereotypes and prejudice. Television often outweighs personal experience in forming these attitudes" (Cortes, 1979: 476). Learning theory is critical in evaluating the role of the media in the formation of negative attitudes toward ethnic minorities.

Learning theory is not new, but it is one of the few theories that has been constantly refined to keep up with contemporary issues. The works of Skinner, Pavlov, Harlow Piaget and others still have important implications today although there has been a marked change from the stimulus response focus of animal experiments. Social learning encompasses cognition, which is a "generic term for any process whereby an organism becomes aware of or obtains knowledge of an object..... It includes perceiving recognizing, conceiving, judging, reasoning (English and English, in Rosenthal, 1978: 1). Further:

It refers to all the processes that enable an individual to represent and deal with the external environment symbolically or imaginally. The individual does not react to stimulation from the distal environment in raw physical form, but first interprets and represents these stimuli. These representations then instigate and guide most subsequent behaviour. By representation of stimuli we mean the way in which stimuli are fitted into a person's cognitive organization which is both a repository of past experiences and a complex information processing device (Rosenthal, 1978: 1).

Perhaps the public is frequently being presented with negative stimuli in the form of stereotypes, and thus according to the

above inset, their interpretations and cognitive formations will be similarly negative. We can see the potential harm that may arise from unselective, unconscious interpretation by the public. People are almost certain to encounter an Arab stereotype at some point, most probably in the media. Since the Arab is invariably portrayed in a negative fashion, it stands to reason, according to Rosenthal's definition, that the person's interpretation and subsequent representation of the Arab will also be negative. Evidence also suggests that "once beliefs (cognitive organizations) are formed considerable contrary evidence is required before they are altered" (Mahoney, 1974; Rosenthal and Siegel, 1959 in Rosenthal, 1978: 2) Historically, the notion of awareness has played a significant part in most cognitive organizations. By awareness, cognitive psychologists "refer to a person's ability to repeat experience, or their skill in selectively exposing themselves to particular experiences" (Rosenthal 1978: 3) Based on this definition, we can say that many people have very little or no awareness, in that they cannot selectively expose themselves to particular experiences. Thus, they have no informed means of forming cognitive organizations. The beliefs that are formed, wrong as they may be, will stay with the person throughout his or her life, for there is usually no evidence to the contrary available to them. At present, such information is scarce, and when it does appear, it is in the back sections of magazines and

newspapers, which the majority of the population does not use. Indeed, approximately 80% of the American population relies solely on television for their news (Shaheen, 1984) which is considered to be the least objective of all media. Ignorance becomes self-perpetuating, the person's original misinformed cognitive organization is never changed, and stereotypes and prejudice continue to thrive in society.

### PROTOTYPES AS STEREOTYPES

A form that represents the key features of a set of objects is called a prototype (Moates and Schumacher, 1980). For example, a prototype of a car would have four wheels, a body, as well as a trunk and hood. It is not any particular make or model of car, simply a creation with the basic features of a car. Posner and Keele (1968, 1970) discovered that humans appear to use prototypes in storing information. Through experimentation, they reported that prototypes, or average figures, are entered into memory along with specific instances. This is consistent with the view that subjects store prototypes of experiences from their world. (Moates and Schumacher, 1980). Some of the more recent work done by psychologists suggests that:

People not only form prototypes of visual objects but also of human faces (Reed, 1972) and personality patterns (Cantor and Mischel, 1977). In many cases such prototypes- or stereotypes -as they are more usually called -play an important role in social interaction. Thus if we have a stereotype of a miser, a football player, or a mentally ill person our behaviour toward a given

individual who falls in any one of these classes is going to be affected (Moates and Schumacher 1980: 25).

We can add the members of any stereotyped group to the above list and examine the significance of what has been discussed so far. Moates and Schumacher seem to be classifying the prototype as harmful, because they lead us to consider all members of the same class in the same way. The theory of cognitive learning shows how the human being is susceptible to outside influences. Humans store prototypes of experiences, situations, even other human beings. When we form prototypes of people, we are categorizing them into groups as a means of reducing the amount of information we must contend with thereby establishing categories of persons whose members are considered to be equivalent in functionally important respects (Hamilton and Troler, 1986). An important component of this process is the perceiver's ability to recognize easily identifiable features of the perceived objects that will constitute the basis for effective categorization. In a social setting, the identification of these features is a simple task, for there are numerous identifiable cues, such as race, age, gender that are immediately recognizable as bases for categorization. This is a natural human process, but unfortunately, it is extremely limiting. There is considerable evidence (Tafjel, Sheikh and Gardner, 1964 Tafjel and Wilkes, 1963; Wilder, 1981) to suggest that:

When others are categorized into groups, we tend to perceive members of the same category as being more



similar to each other, and members of different categories as being more dissimilar than when those persons are viewed as an aggregate of individuals. That is, persons belonging to the same group are perceived as or assumed to be more alike, and persons belonging to different groups are perceived as being more different from one another than when those same persons are perceived in the absence of group identification (Hamilton and Troler, 1986: 129).

Thus, stereotyping seems to be a natural process. The human being is predisposed to forming prototypes of people and placing persons with similar features into one homogeneous group. The end result is that all members of that group are seen to be the same, having the same personal qualities and characteristics. We can see, then, if one reads about "the bad Arabs" in newspapers, or sees them on television, one naturally believes that all Arabs possess the same negative qualities. The human cognitive process appears to be extremely narrow in this regard, as it seems to favour the formation and subsequent use of stereotypes. From a cognitive perspective, then, a stereotype can be defined as a cognitive structure that contains the perceiver's knowledge, beliefs and expectancies about some human group. (Hamilton and Troler, 1986). If this is indeed the case, imagine our surprise if we meet an intelligent football player, a handsome young miser, or a mentally ill person with a steady job. (Moates and Schumacher 1980). The same is true of ethnic minorities, in this case the Arabs. How can people believe that Arabs are normal decent people if they have never seen anything to support that notion? Take the above example of the football

player. The "dumb lineman" is a popular stereotype of a brainless behemoth who extracts great pleasure from plowing his opponents into the ground, indeed, if he is able to figure out who his opponents are. We would be rather surprised to meet a large football player with an "A" average in university courses, or a job in the business world, rather than a gymnasium. Patricia Devine has shown that even though a person may not be prejudiced towards minorities, he/she is still very much aware of the stereotype (Devine, 1989). Devine's experiment showed that "the stereotype is automatically activated in the presence of a member of the stereotyped group" (Devine, 1989 5). The word "automatically" reinforces the fact that human beings, especially young children, have very little or no discretion over their thought processes. What is learned and/or remembered seems to be almost wholly dependant on the situation, something the human being cannot control. It is apparent that the human mind and the way in which things are learned is the greatest obstacle to overcome, because it is unable to select what it is exposing itself to. It is an empty vessel of the highest order, with no filters or regulators to govern what flows into it. Based on overwhelming experimental evidence, there is no doubt that negative stimuli (such as an unfavourable stereotype) induce cognitive formations that are equally negative. Stereotypes are difficult to unseat, and persist even in the face of disconfirming evidence. In the case of

group perceptions:

Viewing group perceptions in probabilistic terms helps explain in part why stereotypes are so persistent even in the light of disconfirming data. Consider how disconfirming instances might be dealt with in the current probabilistic model. If even the strongest stereotypes tend to be probabilistic, then for every stereotype, the perceiver expects that there will be "exceptions to the rule." With disconfirming evidence, perceivers may simply alter their probability distributions across given attributes and over various feature sets or subtypes. With repeated disconfirming evidence, they may create new feature sets. Thus, through subtle differentiation, stereotypes can persist in the face of disconfirming data (Linville, Salovey, and Fischer, 1986: 205).

The role of cognitive processes is even more evident in long term memory. Bousfield (1953) found that "people tended to cluster words into conceptually similar groups spontaneously and covertly organizing information during learning and recall" (Bousfield, 1953 in Rosenthal, 1978: 20). The stereotype is explained in the same manner, except that physical features are grouped similarly instead of words. If these physical features are characteristic of a stereotyped ethnic group (Arabs) then any member of this ethnic group possessing these physical features will be similarly (and unconsciously) placed in the stereotyped group. Experiences with television are very influential in forming a person's everyday beliefs and attitudes. Although the automatic activation of a stereotype does not necessarily lead to prejudice, it is a serious situation because it can facilitate prejudice and racism. Automatic stereotype activation is merely the first step in the progression towards prejudice

and, unfortunately, it does not always stop there. Ehrlich argues that ethnic attitudes and stereotypes are woven into the social heritage fabric of society, and no one can escape learning the prevailing attitudes and stereotypes that are associated with ethnic groups (Ehrlich, 1973).

Most of the discussion so far has centred on stereotypes as they are learned through cognitive processes. Ehrlich however, moves away from a purely cognitive approach, stating that:

The study of stereotyping alone cannot account for the fact that the stereotypes assigned to ethnic groups exhibit uniform and normative characteristics which have persisted through time. Such stability and consensus indicate that neither cognitive processes nor underlying perceptualist or personality dimensions can exclusively account for stereotypes. (Ehrlich, 1973: 20)

According to Ehrlich, then, there is more at hand than cognition in the formation of stereotypes, because "to demonstrate the exclusive dependence of stereotypes upon supporting psychological theories is to be able to adequately explain the existence of a relatively stable consensus on specific stereotypes and their assignment to specific groups" (Ehrlich, 1973: 20). Further, "group categorization clearly introduces a complex set of processes in the formation of social stereotypes" (Schaller and Maas, 1989: 720). Cognitive processes are part of a larger process by which stereotypes are learned. There has been a decided shift away from the singular notion of cognition in the formation of prejudiced attitudes, as is evident in the "new look" of stereotyping

study described by R.C. Gardner. Gardner suggests that whereas we accept the traditional definitions of stereotypes discussed above, our attention should be directed toward studying the individual stereotyper rather than the stereotype itself. In short, this new look focuses on the processes of stereotyping, rather than the product, but nonetheless adopts the position that stereotypes represent consensual beliefs" (Gardner, 1972: 2). The notion of consensus brings many social as well as psychological concepts to the study of stereotyping. From the above discussion, it is apparent that a theoretical framework encompassing both cognitive and social factors is the most appropriate for the study of stereotyping.

#### SOCIAL LEARNING THEORY

This theoretical framework is better known as social learning theory. It is best suited to our needs because particular attention is given to the impact of social variables, such as the behaviour of models, on human cognitive processes (Rosenthal, 1978). Social learning theory suggests that both cognitive factors and external stimuli are involved in the learning process, as is the premise that the environment is ever-changing, not fixed, as suggested by earlier learning theories.

One pillar of social learning theory is the concept of modelling. Albert Bandura explains that "most human behaviour is learned observationally through modelling: from observing

others one forms an idea of how new behaviours are performed and on later occasions this coded information serves as a guide "for action" (Bandura, 1977: 22). Much of the literature on modelling deals with learning through imitation, which is useful for this research. It is very useful, however, in that it identifies reactions to favourable and unfavourable models. Perhaps the best possible summary of the theoretical framework is found in this statement: "models who possess engaging qualities are sought out, while those lacking pleasing characteristics are generally ignored or rejected" (Bandura 1977: 27). As we shall soon see, the Arabs in the mass media are completely devoid of any pleasing characteristics. There is probably no person more evil, corrupt, hideous, inhuman and anti-Western than the Arab created by the Western mass media. This is a perfect example of a negative model. It is little wonder that real-life Arabs are generally ignored or rejected by Western society. This notion of negative model is discussed extensively by Bandura et al., the following is a quote which provides an effective summary of the phenomenon:

The advent of television has greatly expanded the range of models available to children and adults alike. Unlike their predecessors, who were limited largely to familial and subcultural sources of modelling, people today can observe and learn diverse styles of conduct within the comfort of their homes through the abundant symbolic modelling provided by the mass media. Models presented in televised form are so effective in capturing attention that viewers learn much of what they see without requiring any special incentives to do so (Bandura, Grusec and Menlove, 1966: 102).

Bandura further contends that "people's perceptual sets

(cognitive formation), deriving from past experience and situational requirements, affect what features they extract from observations and how they interpret what they see and hear" (Bandura, 1977: 25). If this past experience has been an unfavourable one, it stands to reason that people will remember it in a similarly unfavourable manner. The interpretation of current situations is based upon these former experiences. This may help explain the automatic stereotype activation discussed earlier if we also consider the notion of prototypes. Just as the prototype of a car includes four wheels, a hood and a trunk; dark skin, non-Caucasian facial features, robes, oil wells, camels and a villainous nature etc. are the prototype of an Arab. The fact that the mass media continually display this prototype described by Shaheen as the Instant T.V. Arab Kit (consisting of a belly dancer's outfit, headdresses, veils, sunglasses, tents, oil wells and camels) certainly aids in the activation of the stereotype in the presence of an Arab person. It is easy to understand why children are so vulnerable. The message of "Arab is evil" is so often encountered that it becomes part of the child's memory, and there is no evidence presented to the contrary. It has been shown that both children and adults acquire attitudes, emotional responses and new styles of conduct through filmed and televised modelling (Liebert, Neale and Davidson, 1973).

### SYMBOLIC INTERACTIONISM

Along these lines, it is possible here to introduce the sociological theory of symbolic interactionism, which examines the meaning and importance of symbols in our society. One of the most prominent symbolic interactionists, Herbert Blumer has outlined three basic premises which address the importance of meaning in human action, the source of meaning, and the role of meaning in interpretation (Wallace and Wolf, 1986).

The first premise is stated:

1) Human beings act toward things on the basis of the meanings that the things have for them.

Blumer says that "anything of which a human being is conscious is something which he is indicating to himself....to indicate something is to extricate it from its setting, to hold it apart, to give it a meaning....In any of his countless acts, the individual is designating different objects to himself, giving them meaning, judging their suitability to his action, and making decisions on the basis of the judgement" (Blumer, 1969 cited in Wallace and Wolf, 1986: 204). With regard to stereotyping, we can see that people will react toward members of a stereotyped group on the basis of the meaning that its members have for the person. In this case since Arabs are presented as unfavourable characters in the media, they will have an unfavourable meaning to the perceiver, which means, according to Blumer, that the perceiver will act toward the Arab person with this unfavourable image in their mind. Blumer's second premise is



as follows:

2) The meaning of things arises out of the social interaction one has with one's fellows.

In this way, meaning is a social product; it is created; not inherent in things; it is not a given. Here is an excellent argument against the media for its role in the stereotyping process. People are not born with stereotypic knowledge of another group of people, this is learned from other sources. To quote Blumer: "The meaning of a thing for a person grows out of the ways in which other persons act toward the person with regard to the thing. Their actions operate to define the thing for the person" (Blumer, 1969 cited in Wallace and Wolf 1986: 205). It has already been noted that stereotyping is a form of consensus behaviour, thus, according to Blumer meaning arises from this consensus. Blumer's third premise further addresses the notion of meanings, a notion which is of prime importance in our discussion, because it describes how the perceiver interprets what is perceived, and how the meaning of this is processed:

3) The meaning of things are handled in and modified through an interpretive process used by the person in dealing with the things he encounters.

Blumer says that a person communicates and handles meanings through a process of talking to himself. Someone who gives an account of personal worries and anxieties is interpreting what is disturbing to him or her. Blumer argues that it is in the process of "making indications to oneself" that someone arrives at such an account (Wallace and Wolf, 1986).

According to this premise, a person will question himself or herself on how to act while in contact with an Arab, and will answer that question based upon what they already have interpreted about Arabs. As with any stereotype, this interpretation has most likely been unfavourable, and will be reflected in the person's actions toward the minority group member.

Blume's three premises further illustrate the process of stereotyping by the human being. Although the Arab person (or any person) is not technically a "thing" or an "object", the human mind does store prototypes in this way, and attaches meaning to the various "things" encountered. Bandura offers symbolic modelling in a similar vein, to describe the meaning that objects have for the perceiver.

Bandura's concept of symbolic modelling adds to our theoretical framework. Its major significance lies in its tremendous multiplicative power (Bandura, 1977). Symbolic modelling is unlike learning by doing, says Bandura, which requires shaping the actions of each individual by repeated experience:

In observational learning a single model can transmit new behaviour patterns simultaneously to vast numbers of people in widely dispersed locations. Also, during the course of their daily lives, people have direct contact with only a small sector of the environment. Consequently their perceptions of social reality are heavily influenced by vicarious experiences-what they see hear and read in the media. The more peoples' images of reality derive from the media's symbolic environment, the greater is its social impact. (Bandura, 1977: 40).

In summary, social learning theory, which considers cognitive factors and external stimuli to be the main influences on learning, describes how the mass media can influence the learning process. The above discussion of modelling identifies how negative stereotypes imbed themselves in the thought structures of human beings. Blumer's three premises of symbolic interactionism provide further corroboration for learning theory by articulating the symbolic nature of stereotyping, in that they explain how the meaning of symbols is created. "Monkey see--Monkey do" is a simple but effective cliché in assessing why what we see has such a powerful and lasting impression on us. We remember things as they are presented to us, and these representations positive or negative, become a natural part of our everyday lives. Canadian communications guru Marshall McLuhan summed up the power of the mass media in his one line "the medium is the message". Social learning theory shows us just how these messages are received and interpreted.

## METHODOLOGY

This study shall examine the editorials and feature articles in The New York Times for the period of the Persian Gulf crisis. The period is from August 2, 1990 to January 15, 1991, covering the time just before the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait to the start of the war, a total of 70 issues. The New York Times is the largest circulation daily in the U.S., and is generally considered to be the most influential daily in the world. An analysis of themes shall be employed to determine (a) the nature of stereotypes of Arabs that continue to exist, as well as any new ones, and (b) whether the U.S. newspapers have become more balanced in their coverage of Arab affairs. The question of whether the fact that the U.S. was fighting on the side of some Arab countries impacted the reporting shall also be addressed. This is of great importance in light of Suleiman's (1988) assertion that there is, among Americans, a tendency to group all Arab nations into one homogeneous whole. Thus, there is the possibility that any anti-Iraqi material may have been presented as anti-Arab.

An open-ended, exploratory style of theme analysis shall be utilized. The typical stereotypes of the Arab (e.g. barbaric, uncultured, nomadic, primitive mentality, etc.) have already been discussed in the review of the literature. The open-ended format will allow for any new stereotypes to be identified, as well as the established ones. The articles

shall be examined for stereotypical portrayals, and the resultant patterns analyzed. Themes regarding Islam, terrorism, oil, in short, any theme that has been and continues to be associated with the Arabs, will be identified. Analysis of these themes allows for the identification of the direction the Times has taken in its reporting. This direction will be analyzed in light of the material previously covered in the "Literature Review" and the forthcoming chapter entitled "Common Arab Stereotypes and Their Sources". The previous scholarship on this subject, which describes the media portrayals of Arabs is a solid base for assessing the articles in the Times. The Tuesday, Thursday and Sunday editions of each paper are chosen for this research because they are typically the largest editions of the week. The Sunday papers are especially important, due to the volume of feature articles and commentary. The aim is to identify the prevalence or absence of both new and established stereotypes through theme analysis, to determine the nature of the stereotypes that exist, and whether the U.S. newspapers have become more balanced in their coverage of Arab affairs. Suleiman (1974) noted a move toward greater balance in U.S. news magazines. Terry (1973) documented differences between U.S. and European newspapers, with the Europeans clearly showing greater balance. It is the purpose of this research to determine whether or not the U.S. newspapers have become more balanced in their coverage of Arab affairs during the

Persian Gulf crisis. Through analysis of the themes relating to Arabs in the Times in light of what is already known, a pattern or direction in the Times' reporting may be identified.

## CHAPTER II: COMMON ARAB STEREOTYPES AND THEIR SOURCES

### i. Social Science Textbooks

Outside the sphere of the mass media, social science and history textbooks have also been found to transmit distorted information where ethnic minorities are concerned (Al-Qazzaz 1975). The material in these texts is quite influential in a child's learning experience, especially if the material is encountered in different stages of the child's education. Al Qazzaz (1975) examined thirty-six such textbooks used in elementary and junior high schools during 1974-75 and found a wealth of inaccurate descriptions, the most common one being a nomadic lifestyle (al-Qazzaz, 1975). Every textbook mentioned camels, the desert and Bedouins. In the important early years in school (up to Grade 4) students encounter the Arab either as a Bedouin or as a peasant (al-Qazzaz, 1975). Pictures in these textbooks regularly show tents and camels giving further notion to the "nomadic" notion of Arab life.

The perceived "backward" aspect of Arab societies, noted earlier by Suleiman (1988), is well documented in these textbooks. One textbook made reference to the American, Gobi Australian and Sahara deserts, and excluded the Sahara from the discussion of development in these deserts (Al-Qazzaz 1975). Obviously, the discovery of oil in the Middle East has led to substantial development of these desert areas, and some of the Arab cities (i.e. Baghdad, Abu Dhabi, Riyadh, Kuwait

City, Muscat, Doha) are fascinating blends of the old and the very modern. A Canadian worker returning from Kirkuk, Iraq likened the city to Calgary, Alberta, a modern city of approximately 675 000 people, headquarters to many natural resource companies. In fact, with respect to development, "no other country has advanced so far so fast as Saudi Arabia" (Kelly, cited in Shaheen, 1984: 19). Despite these major developments over the years, the Arabs are still presented as a primitive and backwards people. The fact that many of yesterday's Bedouins are employed as drillers or machinists with Arab, European and American oil companies is not documented in any of the textbooks (Al-Qazzaz, 1975).

Al-Qazzaz, like Suleiman (1974, 1988), identifies the Arab-Israeli conflict and Zionism as important underlying factors in the portrayal of Arabs in the media. According to Al-Qazzaz (1975: 119), "many textbooks perpetuate the Zionist myth that the land of Palestine was a desert when the Jewish settlers arrived there". The textbooks emphasized the hard work of the Jewish settlers in transforming the lifeless desert into a fertile area suitable for agriculture. However Al-Qazzaz provides evidence that contradicts this claim. He quotes Richard Bevis, a professor at the American University of Beirut who states that "many European travellers who visited Palestine in the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries reported that substantial parts of Palestine have long been fertile and productive" (as cited in



Al-Qazzaz, 1975: 119).

The overemphasis on the desert in the discussion of Arabs undoubtedly gives the impression that the majority of Arabs are desert people (Al-Qazzaz, 1975). According to the results of a 1972 survey done by one of Al-Qazzaz' students, "desert people" was the most common description of Arabs given by 251 junior and senior high school students, the less common ones being war-engaged, poor, bad guys, stoic, exotic riches (Al-Qazzaz, 1975). When the same group of students were asked for the source of their information about the Arab, 80 percent responded "textbooks" and "mass media". The inaccurate depictions of the Arab are present in all forms of media, but the problem takes on a particular seriousness in light of Al-Qazzaz' study. The textbooks examined cover the educational spectrum from Grade 3 to senior high school, and the distorted information appears at all levels. Carlos Cortes (1979) notes that the school curriculum is only a small part of the societal curriculum. He also asserts that "Students learn from the societal curriculum (although we can never be sure what each one has learned about each subject) and that learning affects their formal education" (Cortes, 1979: 478). Cortes is arguing that what is learned outside the classroom influences what is learned inside the classroom. The Arabs are faced with a two-fold problem because first, the societal curriculum of everyday life is biased against them, and secondly, the school curriculum is similarly biased. It has

been argued that the transmission of anti-minority literature is related more to the American cultural tradition of prejudice than to any malicious intent on the part of the textbook authors (Allport, 1954 and Simpson and Yinger, 1972 both cited in Al-Qazzaz, 1975). Whether this is the case or not, the fact remains that, at the time of Al-Qazzaz' study the textbooks that are so vital to a child's education presented the Arab in a distorted, inaccurate fashion. There can be little doubt that such material promotes ignorance as well as stereotypes and prejudice. It is Al-Qazzaz' conclusion that "students who use the elementary and junior high school social science textbooks reviewed in this study will likely develop a distorted idea of the Arab" (Al-Qazzaz 1975: 131).

#### ii. School and Societal Curriculum

Within the school system, stereotyping presents itself in human as well as written form. Shuraydi (1981) reports that American teachers and students are largely influenced by the stereotypical characterization of the Arab culture as it prevails in American society as a whole. Further, McDiarmid and Pratt (1971) found that many teachers tended to mirror textbook biases (Kenny, 1975). Kenny's study, done in 1975 is a Canadian version of Al-Qazzaz (1975) with a few important additions. Kenny (1975) questioned teachers about what dominant characteristics that various Middle East peoples had.

For the Arabs, several teachers remarked on the connection between them and Islam and their contribution to Western civilization (Kenny, 1975). As might be expected, however the "qualities most frequently associated with the Arabs include wild, uncivilized, nomadic, backward, disorganized and militant against Israel" (Kenny, 1975: 138). Kenny (1975) reported that in the textbooks he examined there was an overemphasis on nomadism, remarkably similar to the findings of Al-Qazzaz (1975). Kenny (1975: 144) states "Although there are some very good descriptions of nomadic life under desert conditions, it is a travesty to picture the typical Arab of today as a Bedouin, dressed in Bedouin headgear and flowing robe, and accompanied by his ubiquitous camel". William Polk a Middle East scholar reports that "the desert nomad is a vanishing species - and his camel, too" (Polk, 1973, cited in Kenny, 1975: 144). Shaheen provides the strongest refutation of the Arab as nomad depiction by using the statistical assertion that less than 5 percent of the Arab population is Bedouin (i.e. nomadic) (Shaheen, 1984). Recall here Edward Said's discussion of Orientalism and myths reviewed earlier. The information in the textbooks reviewed by both Al-Qazzaz and Kenny seems to be based solely on myths. On the subject of myths, Shaheen (1984) argues that the media perpetuates four basic ones about Arabs: they are all fabulously wealthy, they are all barbaric and uncultured, they are sex maniacs with a penchant for white slavery, and they revel in acts of

terrorism. There is also the tendency to associate Arabs with oil, a theme which dominated the Western view of Arabs from the early 70's to the present.

### iii. The Question of Oil

There is perhaps no more prevalent stereotype of the Arab today than that of oil sheikh. The oil well has joined the headdress, flowing robe, tent and camel as standard items associated with the Arab. Any "petroleum problem" (i.e. shortages, price increases) in the Western world is usually seen to be the fault of the Arabs. Perhaps this is best explained by the fact that "for many Americans, the acronym OPEC means Arab with a negative connotation" (Shaheen, 1984: 14). Shaheen attacks this well established myth, stating:

When T.V. anchors say "OPEC", viewers often see a bearded, robed Arab appear on the screen. But the fact remains that only seven of the thirteen OPEC members are Arab nations. Of the five largest oil producing nations, only one, Saudi Arabia is Arab. The Saudis are OPEC's most moderate member, usually voting against exorbitant price increases. They increased oil production in 1978 through 1980 at a price four dollars per barrel below that of other major producers. In contrast, the role of U.S. oil companies in price setting rarely receives mention in television newscasts (Shaheen, 1984: 15).

According to the New York Times' editorial of August 14, 1991 the Saudis are still maintaining their moderate stance on oil. The editorial states "It's no wonder that OPEC countries will now meet, presumably to re-establish the Saudi Arabian goal of a stable and predictable market for oil" (NYT, Aug. 14, 1991: Editorial). Shaheen also cites a Newsweek article which

states that "The United States obtains only about five percent of its imported oil from the Arabian Gulf. Saudi Arabia is in sixth place behind Mexico, Canada, Venezuela, Britain and Indonesia" (Newsweek, March 12, 1984: 12, cited in Shaheen 1984). The situation was different in 1988, however, when the U.S. imported more oil from Saudi Arabia than she did from any other country, approximately 17.7 percent of the total imports (Statistical Abstracts of the United States, 1990). This may seem like a substantial amount, but the real significance lies in comparison with figures from other countries for that same year.

In 1988, the U.S. obtained 13.3 percent of its imported oil from Canada, 12.1 percent from Mexico, 5 percent from the United Kingdom, 11.9 percent from Nigeria, and 14.1 percent from other, non-Arab nations (Statistical Abstracts of the United States, 1990). Of the approximately 1.87 billion barrels of oil that the U.S. imported in 1988, only 330 million came from Saudi Arabia, and the total volume from Arab countries was approximately 485 million barrels (Statistical Abstracts of the United States, 1990). Although this is a significant portion of total imported oil (@ 26.6 percent) it is only a very small amount of oil in terms of total U.S. consumption of both domestic and imported oil (about 10 percent, as we shall soon see). The latest television commercial put out by the American Nuclear Association does not portray this situation accurately. In it, the song "Lean

on Me" plays while video footage of Libya's Muammar Qaddafi, Iran's former Ayatollah Khomeini and Iraqi president Saddam Hussein flashes across the screen. The three men are seen making speeches to cheering masses, and there is Arabic writing in the background. The commercial's message is that we (the U.S.) must escape our dependence on these "unstable leaders", as they are referred to, and their Arabian oil through the increased use of nuclear power. This commercial is nothing but the worst form of advertisement because it is completely false and misleading. The intent was to cast the Arab as an enemy, even though the Ayatollah Khomeini was Iranian (Persian) and not an Arab. Some statistical findings expose this commercial as the lie that it is. In 1988, the U.S. obtained only 6.7 percent of its total imported oil from Iraq, and absolutely nothing from either Libya or Iran (Statistical Abstracts of the United States, 1990). The commercial would be more accurate if the characters were a Saudi, a Canadian, a Mexican, or a Nigerian. The media does not associate oil with these countries, save the Saudis. I do not recall ever having seen an Alberta "oil cowboy" or a Mexican "oil bandito", nor even a Nigerian "oil tribesman" portrayed in a negative fashion in the media, let alone even portrayed, although the oil sheikh is one of the most common Arab images we encounter in the media. Canada (13.3%), Mexico (12.1%), Nigeria (11.9%), Venezuela (8.6%) and non-Arab countries identified as "other" (14.1%) accounted for

approximately 74 percent of the total U.S. oil imports in 1988, compared to 26.6 percent for Arab nations (Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1990). We must wonder how many people actually know that Canada, Mexico, Venezuela and Nigeria are major oil exporters to the U.S., for there is little or no media coverage of this fact. Why is importing Arab oil considered to be somehow more dangerous than importing non-Arab oil? In the September 1 edition of the New York Times, an article by Al Tonelson and Andrew Hurd addresses the question of importing Arab oil. It is their contention that the U.S. has acted foolishly because "rather than move to diversify oil imports, the U.S. has allowed its dependency on oil from Arab OPEC members to rise from 8.5 percent of imports in 1985 to 26.6 percent in 1989" (NYT, Sept. 1, 1990). They do not fault the Arabs for this increase; they lay the blame on the U.S. for not developing alternative resources. However, they have only mentioned Arab OPEC countries. There is no mention of the other countries (OPEC and otherwise) that export oil to the U.S. As we have just discussed, the volume of oil from these countries cannot be dismissed as unimportant or negligible. In fact, just the opposite is true. By not mentioning the other countries that account for roughly 74 percent of the U.S. imported oil Tonelson and Hurd are leaving out the majority of the picture. By doing this, they seem to be saying that Arab oil is somehow worse than non-Arab oil. Would it be better to cut Arab oil

imports and increase Mexican ones? Canadian ones? Nigerian ones? Should not dependency on all oil imports be the main concern of the U.S., not just the 26.6 percent of these imports that come from Arab countries? If the U.S. was so serious about curbing foreign oil imports, steps would be taken to alleviate the problem of traffic congestion in major cities which wastes approximately 3 billion gallons of gasoline per year (WLLZ Radio "Earth Minute", October, 1991). Western governments could introduce legislation calling for higher gas mileage figures for cars, as each mile per gallon increase would save about 420 000 barrels of oil per day (NYT, Sept. 20, 1990: Op-Ed pages). Canadians use the most energy per capita in the world, and their U.S. counterparts use 3 times as much gasoline per capita as do the Japanese (WLLZ Radio, "Earth Minute", October, 1991). Ironically, as the world's largest crude oil consumer, both in total volume and per capita, the U.S. has no national energy policy. Gasoline supply and prices in the U.S. do nothing to discourage its use. The Tonelson and Hurd article concludes with the line "we should recognize Persian Gulf oil not as a bargain, but as a dangerous rip-off" (NYT, Sept.1, 1990: Op-Ed pages) presumably as an assertion that the cost to the U.S. of protecting the Arab oil interests is simply not worth it. The term "rip-off" conjures up all sorts of negative images. Recall the stereotype of the underhanded Arab businessman discussed earlier. The exclusion of some important facts, and



the selective reporting of others severely weaken the argument proposed by Tonelson and Hurd. They present a false view of the actual phenomenon of oil imports. By identifying Arab oil as the culprit and ignoring the other countries from which the U.S. receives the majority of her imports, the Arabs are once again misrepresented.

In contrast to the article by Tonelson and Hurd, the September 13, 1990 edition of the New York Times shows a feature article by Caleb Carr and James Chance. They supported the movement of U.S. troops into the Middle East because "any crisis which threatens a cutoff of the Persian Gulf oil that goes to Western Europe and Japan (more than 50 percent of their energy needs rely on the Gulf) merits a forceful American response, even though we receive only about five to ten percent of our oil from the region" (NYT, Sept. 13, 1990: Op-Ed pages). We must assume that they mean total oil consumption (domestic and imported) when they say "our oil". It is a major flaw of Tonelson and Hurd's article not to mention total U.S. consumption. The U.S. did receive 26.6 percent of her imported oil from the Gulf in 1988, but how much is this in terms of total U.S. consumption? According to Carr and Chance, it is only five to ten percent, a very small percentage indeed. This shatters the myth that the U.S. is dependent upon Arab oil. It is through comparison of import statistics that we realize that far too much emphasis is placed on the problems of importing Arab oil, and that this

emphasis is entirely unfounded, because it is completely based on misconception. Arab oil represents about one quarter of U.S. imports, but exactly what percentage of total U.S. consumption this represents is often excluded from reports. The U.S. consumed approximately 4.85 billion barrels of oil in 1988, with 1.87 billion of these being imported (Statistical Abstracts of the United States, 1990). As mentioned before, imports from Arab countries in 1988 numbered approximately 485 million barrels, which represent only about 10 percent of total U.S. consumption. Thus, the statistics corroborate the argument put forth by Carr and Chance, that the U.S. really does receive only about 5 to 10 percent of her oil from the region. This effectively negates any claim that the U.S. is dependent upon Arab oil.

The association of Arabs with oil is an important one because of the role that oil plays in Western culture. Petroleum is the lifeblood of capitalism, driving our industries, and in turn our economy. Life would be different without many of the thousands of petroleum based products that exist in Western society. Are Westerners wary of Arabs because they have such great reserves of this most precious commodity? This certainly appears to be the case in the U.S. One of the most common media practices during the Gulf crisis was to monitor the rate at which gasoline prices were increasing. Television newscasts featured irate motorists lamenting the fact that gas was more expensive than ever.

Historically, there have been few occurrences which upset North American consumers more than rising prices at the pump. Europeans are used to paying high prices for gasoline, the minimum being about \$5 (U.S.) per gallon, but rising gas prices are big news in North America. On this topic, Shaheen criticizes the "television commercials which play upon national frustrations by citing OPEC members (wrongly equated with Arabs by the U.S. public) as the culprits that cause inflation" (Shaheen, 1984: 14). There is a false belief that the Arabs have complete control over the world's oil supply and are therefore free to raise prices whenever they see fit. The role of U.S. oil companies in price setting rarely receives mention in the news (Shaheen, 1984).

The world's largest oil companies such as Exxon (U.S.), Mobil (U.S.) British Petroleum (U.K.), Phillips (U.S.), Shell (Netherlands), Imperial (Canada), Texaco (U.S.), Atlantic Ritchfield (U.S.) and others are responsible for the vast majority of the world's oil supply. This is not to say that the Arabs have no involvement in the oil business, they simply do not have a hammerlock around the world's neck when it comes to price setting, as is commonly believed. OPEC is an organizational cartel whose prices are determined by supply and demand, tariff and tax rates, shipping costs, in short market forces. Decisions are made among the cartel's thirteen member nations, and the seven Arab countries do not have the absolute power to dictate market prices. This point, however,

is not well understood by the American public. To many people, OPEC is synonymous with Arab oil, and Arab greed is the assumed reason for rising gas prices. Indeed, to blame the Arabs for rising oil prices is akin to blaming wheat farmers for an increase in the price of bread. They may play a small part, but by no means are they the sole player. In the end, it is the market that determines prices in a capitalist economy.

#### iv. The Myth of Excessive Wealth

Another common theme (or myth) that the Western media perpetuates is that Arabs are fantastically wealthy, and that this wealth is somehow connected to the petroleum industry. While it is true that there are incredibly wealthy Arab oil sheikhs, businessmen and kings, this is hardly representative of the general population. Of the 300 million people who live in the Arab world, most are poor (Shaheen, 1984). There is a tremendous gap between rich and poor in Arab countries, but similar gaps exist in Western societies. As the previous section pointed out, the ultra-wealthy oil sheikh is one of the most common Arab stereotypes in the media, and there is no doubt that such people do exist. However, as with the vast majority of Arab images in the media, the oil sheikh is usually presented as a reprehensible human being.

In the media portrayals (mostly in films and television) the Arab oil sheikh often has more money than he knows what to

do with, and ends up wasting it frivolously (Shaheen, 1984). They are hedonistic and engage in underhanded business deals while attempting to buy women, real estate, and American politicians (Shaheen, 1984). While much is made of American foreign aid, we do not hear that Saudi Arabia is one of the world's largest aid donors, with much of their revenue "spent to assist the poor in Arab and other Third World nations increase food production, acquire technological capabilities build schools and hospitals, develop Arab natural resources and search for alternative sources of energy" (Shaheen, 1984: 87). The subject of oil revenue reveals some of the most inaccurate reporting. Shaheen (1984) cites political and economic analyst John Law who states that:

It was a popular pastime in the 1970's to figure out how many days of Arab oil production it would take to buy all of IBM (210 days). What makes this type of comparison misleading is the assumption that oil revenues provide the Arabs only with extra pocket money to shop around with - whereas, in fact, oil production provides virtually the entire income that the producing countries have to live on and use for their development (Law, 1980, cited in Shaheen, 1984: 87).

If we apply similar logic to the U.S., argues Law, then "it could be said that the American people, who produce so much in goods and services every year (\$2 trillion) that they can buy up all of Great Britain, France, West Germany, Switzerland and still have enough money left to buy 15 Saudi Arabias" (Law 1980, cited in Shaheen, 1984: 87). The entire issue of Arab wealth is greatly exaggerated. In terms of per capita income in 1979, the wealthier oil producing countries of the Arabian

Gulf- Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates had an average per capita income of slightly more than \$12 000 (U.S.), while the U.S. per capita income for the same period was \$10 600 (Shaheen, 1984). Shaheen also reports that "according to a 1981 World Bank development report, the other Arab cultures had a per capita income of less than \$200 per year" (Shaheen, 1984: 14). The greater majority of Arab people are poor, not rich as is commonly believed. Or, as Donn O'Brien, former Vice President of Program Practices at CBS comments "you think Arab, you think money. People don't realize that there are a lot of first and second generation Arabs in this country who are making it the American way" (O'Brien, cited in Shaheen, 1984: Back Cover).

The stereotypical Arab oil sheikh is actually an anomaly in the Western media, because his wealth represents something that all Westerners wish to possess, but it is not good that the Arab possesses it. Why is it somehow wrong or abnormal to have oil as a natural resource? Many other countries (especially Canada and the U.S.) use natural resources for export revenues, yet the people who amass fortunes as a result of these activities are not negatively stereotyped like the Arab oil sheikh is. For example, German-born Friedrich Weyerhaeuser revolutionized the U.S. lumber industry by introducing re-forestation techniques to replace the lumber he sold. Both he and the company that bears his name today owe their success to natural resources. It is unthinkable that we

will ever see any negative lumber-oriented stereotypes attached to companies such as Weyerhaeuser and their executives. In a similar vein, we can examine the vast natural resource holdings of Canada's Bronfman and Reichmann families. The Bronfmans are the majority shareholders in Noranda Mines, a Canada-wide mining and technology company. They also have a substantial stake in MacMillan Bloedel, a giant pulp and paper conglomerate with forestry crews, mills and processing plants across Canada. Toronto's Reichmann family, with their majority holdings in Abitibi Price, the largest newsprint manufacturer in the world, enjoy control of a company that employs 14 000 people and had revenues in excess of 3.1 billion dollars in 1990 (Report on Business, October 1991). These two families have fortunes that rank both of them in the top twenty (the Reichmanns are actually eighth) list of the richest people in the world (Forbes, May 1990). Yet we have never heard that any member of these families has ever tried to buy politicians, women U.S. states, or that they are somehow a threat to world security. Moving to the U.S., there are similar examples. The Texas oilman is perhaps one of the most common stereotypes in American culture at present. However, this stereotype is far from being negative. Television shows like "Dallas" revealed that the Texas oil business revolved around power sex, glamour and money, a very desirable lifestyle to most Americans. A former Texas oilman, George Bush, is now one of the most

popular presidents in U.S. history. John D. Rockefeller epitomized the "American dream" by acquiring a near monopoly on the oil refining business in the U.S. becoming the world's first billionaire (Arts and Entertainment Network Biography Series, 1990). It was the oil business that allowed him to endow a medical research centre in 1901 with 500 million dollars, as well as give generously to various educational, scientific and religious funds throughout his lifetime (New Lexicon Webster's Dictionary, 1987). John D. Rockefeller's oil based fortunes have received quite a different type of coverage than Arab oil money, however. Rockefeller is a hero, the Arab is a rogue. To explain this phenomenon, it is necessary to examine the position and aura of the very wealthy in American society.

The people of Western culture generally admire the wealthy, as wealth is one of the sole indicators to prove that one has "made it" in Western society. Those who make disparaging remarks about the wealthy are most probably jealous, for who among us would not like to have more money? While professional persons in our society may indeed enjoy an excellent standard of living and are envied by some members of society, it is the super wealthy who merit our attentions. They are the industrialists, the true capitalists who own the means of production. They are not the \$200 000 a year executives, but the ones who are able to pay these executives. In short, they are the multi-millionaires or even



billionaires. This is how Arab wealth is perceived. It is lavish and extreme. The ultra-wealthy are revered and held in high esteem by the vast majority of the Western population; this class is the desired class. These people are considered to be intelligent, sophisticated, worldly and generally "better" than other members of society.

The Arab oil sheikh or businessman does not enjoy this kind of reputation in Western culture, however. They are frivolous spenders who give in to primitive desires to be satisfied with luxury goods (Shaheen, 1984). According to some T.V. programs they have wished to buy on separate occasions two Congressmen, a mayor, the State of Nevada, the Equal Rights Amendment (!) with a roll of bills with presidents nobody's ever seen before (Shaheen, 1984). They have also been seen losing harem maidens in poker games giving away Rolls-Royces (more than once) and attempting to buy Palm Springs (Shaheen, 1984). Here is the contradiction. While wealthy Westerners are envied for their money and subsequent lifestyle, the media tells us that we should be wary of wealthy Arabs who can buy anything they want at the drop of a hat. It has already been noted that a major factor behind the stereotyping of Arabs is that they (and Islam) are perceived to be a threat to the Western world and Christianity. By suggesting not only that Arabs are able, but actually want to, purchase anything American (even states and politicians), the media continues to portray the Arab as a

threat to the Western world. It is true that some of the wealthy oil sheikhs are corrupted, idiotic and do misuse their wealth. The danger lies in generalizing about Arab wealth as characteristic of all Arabs.

#### v. Contradictory Stereotypes

What is immediately obvious is that the Arab is the victim of an incredibly well developed set of stereotypes. Ironically, many of these stereotypes are contradictory. For example, if the Arab mind is backward and primitive, how does the Arab (supposedly) become so wealthy? It takes a great deal of hard work, "know how", and business savvy to make the kind of money that people associate with the Arabs. If the Arabs are all nomads, then what purpose do any of the large Arabian cities serve? How did such a supposedly primitive thinking people give us the clock, the alphabet, agriculture algebra, identities of major diseases, the world's first observatory, the guitar, and advances in optics research (Shaheen, 1984). Shaheen asserts that "like other people, Arabs have made many contributions to civilization, yet these contributions are rarely shown on our television screens " (Shaheen, 1984: 11). Or, as Jones (1991: A14) states, after listing several Arab accomplishments, "Arabs are at the centre of our modern civilization, but a widespread case of historical amnesia has banished them to some remote island of memory".

vi. The Implications of ABSCAM

Perhaps the single best indication of how widespread and deep rooted the stereotypes of Arabs are was the ABSCAM operation of 1978. This con-game, as Suleiman (1982: 69) points out "involved an agency of the United States government charged with maintaining the law and deterring crime itself resorted to the use of a reprehensible mechanism in which it both exploited and reinforced a popular image of Arab oil sheikhs as extremely wealthy individuals who are liars, cheats and who resort to bribery and corruption to get what they want illegally from American legislators". The FBI invented an Arab sheikh in order to trap "less than trustworthy politicians" (Shaheen, 1984: 55). The operation had two FBI agents dress up in traditional sheikh clothing. The agents had "Arab" names: Sheikh Kambir Rachman (actually an Indian name) from Oman and Sheikh Yasser Habib from Lebanon (a country with no oil sheikhs) (Shaheen, 1984). Apparently, the operation succeeded, but at what price to the Arabs? Suleiman (1982: 70) finds it "most alarming that the FBI agents who carried out the ABSCAM operation did not even consider that they were maligning anyone or any group". An editorial in New Republic entitled "The Other Anti-Semitism" noted that "it's an unattractive reflection on society that a resort to crude stereotypes should be so acceptable and so effective at the upper reaches of government" (New Republic, cited in Shaheen 1984: 55). The importance of this quote cannot be overlooked.

Politicians are ideally non-biased, well informed individuals who are responsible for the decision making in a country. If these persons can be so easily duped by a stereotype, what can we surmise about the vulnerability to these stereotypes of the population as a whole? We know of the demeaning stereotypes and prejudice associated with the racial slur "nigger". Consider, then, being dismissed as a "sand nigger", as Arabs are, not just by everyday citizens, but also by "mid-level right wing staffers at the White House" (Bell, cited in Shaheen, 1988). The sad truth, as Suleiman (1982) points out is that ABSCAM demonstrated that the negative stereotype of the Arab oil sheikh is so well established in society that it was taken to be the real thing. Also worthy of note is the title of the operation. We can only imagine the magnitude of the uproar if a similar JEWSCAM or BLACKSCAM project were to be contemplated, let alone tolerated or carried out (Suleiman 1982). In the political realm, numerous implications follow from this stereotyping. As Suleiman (1982: 70) notes "both those who seek election as well as incumbents often end up supporting Israeli (i.e. anti-Arab) causes, but also find it useful to say something derogatory about Arabs or their viewpoints". Suleiman (1982) also acknowledges that a politician is committing political suicide by siding with the Arabs.

### vii. The Limited Options of Journalists

This problem would be greatly reduced, perhaps even eliminated if negative stereotypes were removed from all forms of media. It is the media that holds the greatest power in shaping attitudes and beliefs. On this topic, Suleiman paints a disturbing picture of media practices in explaining why stereotypes have become so well ingrained in the media. He reports that:

The fact that Americans hold these negative views of Arabs makes it difficult for reporters in any medium to report honestly, objectively and adequately. They have, first, to overcome their own prejudices, which are broadly shared by their colleagues, superiors and the public in general. If journalists present views or even information which differs from the "accepted" ideas, they will have conflicts with their bosses. Even if they win here, they will be reporting to readers who have strongly held, preconceived ideas. Consequently their reports will often be viewed as shallow or prejudiced, and in either case, are likely to be easily forgotten or dismissed as the exception rather than the rule. The alternative, which is the most comfortable option to choose, is for reporters to exercise a degree of prior restraint so that they refrain from reporting too favourably on Arabs or Muslims, even when the facts warrant such reports. (Suleiman, 1982: 64)

This quote suggests that it is pointless for a journalist to prepare news events in an objective manner, because of the unfavourable reaction that such reporting would draw from both superiors and the public. It seems as though the report must fall into line with expectancies or the status quo. The journalist would appear to have little choice in such matters. He/she should report things as the superiors and the public wish them to be reported. The negative reporting of past

events involving Arabs has already been discussed at length. Our task now is to examine the reporting of the latest crisis involving the Arabs to determine whether this reporting mirrors that of the past, or whether such reporting has become more favourable (i.e. less stereotypical) and objective.

### CHAPTER III: THE NEW YORK TIMES EARLY REPORTING

In the weeks following Iraq's invasion of Kuwait on August 2, 1990, the New York Times brimmed with feature articles and editorial comments. The editions covered in this chapter begin with the August 2nd and run to September 16th. For our purposes, material for this period shall be identified as the early reporting. The clear and distinct theme arising from this reporting is wholehearted disapproval for Iraq's military action. This disapproval was directed squarely at Iraq, and not at Arabs in general. The inaccurate nature of the textbooks studied by al-Qazzaz (1975), the myths of Orientalism discussed by Said (1974), the stereotypical T.V. Arab described by Shaheen (1984) and the one sided reporting of Western news magazines identified by Suleiman (1974), are almost completely absent from this particular newspaper. In Shaheen's 1988 Newsweek article, he notes that the "Arab remains American culture's favourite whipping boy" (Shaheen, 1988: 10). While this may be true of American culture in general, the Arab is definitely not the New York Times' favourite whipping boy.

Shaheen's 1988 Newsweek article has considerable significance because he reports that print and broadcast journalists have started to challenge the Arab stereotypes. Shaheen (1988) argues that the "swarthy menace" stereotype of Arabs today has been passed on from another group of Semites who suffered from the same inaccurate stereotype, namely the

Jews. According to Shaheen (1988: 10) the journalists are starting to reveal "a more humane image of Palestinian Arabs a people who traditionally suffered from the myth that Palestinian equals terrorist." Remember that this is a 1988 article, and it appears that, in the 1990's, Shaheen's wish that "others could follow that lead and retire the stereotypical Arab to a media Valhalla" (Shaheen, 1988: 10) is coming to fruition in The New York Times. The changes are especially encouraging in light of the earlier works of Suleiman (1974, 1982, 1988), Said (1974) and Shaheen himself (1984), all of which document stereotypical images of the Arab in all forms of media. The New York Times reporting challenges the existing Arab stereotypes, and in many instances, gives the Arab a human face.

#### i. Islam Reconsidered

It has already been mentioned that Islam is viewed with suspicion in the Western world, largely because it is perceived to be a threat to Christianity and Judaism (Suleiman, 1988). According to Miller and Woll, Arabs represent a religion (Islam) supposedly at war with Judaism and Christianity, and also a region at war with Western concepts of political economy and order (Miller and Woll, 1987). The actions of some Islamic fundamentalists may also raise the notion that Islam is not a religion, but a fanatical cult which encourages and condones violent behaviour. In a



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survey done by Vancouver teacher Mordecai Briemberg, a group of senior high school students listed cult, black, and Ayatollah as things they associated with the word Muslim (Jones, 1991). Allah, the Arabic word for God, is dismissed as some sort of worthless idol or pagan saint. All of this, despite the fact that "Islam, like Christianity and Judaism maintains that all mankind is one family in the care of God" (Shaheen, 1988: 10). The editorials and feature articles in The New York Times reveal the truth about the Muslim faith, that it is, like any other religion, a means for its followers to worship and express devotion to their God.

There are several positive references to Islam in the first month of reporting. The August 21st editorial in The New York Times stated that "The Iraqi invasion is a crime, and an offense against all Arab and Islamic laws" (NYT, Aug. 21, 1990: Op-Ed pages). The editorial of August 23rd carries a similar message, stating that "Caddam affronts Islamic law and custom by interning foreigners" (NYT, Aug. 23, 1990: Op-Ed pages). These statements show that Islam is a "normal" religion, opposed to violence, rather than one that condones beheadings and having many wives (Shaheen, 1984). Even President George Bush said that "the actions of Saddam Hussein went against the tradition of Arab hospitality, against the tradition of Islam" (cited in Shaheen, 1990: B3). The Times also acknowledges that if there was to be a debate on the Gulf crisis, Saddam would have two chairs ready on stage because

hospitality is an essence of Islamic culture (NYT, Sept. 2, 1990).

According to Shaheen (1990: B3), "the most distorted and misunderstood aspect of Islam concerns the status of women." Shaheen (1990) speaks out against the Western media practices of portraying Arab women as mute, uneducated, unattractive, enslaved beings who exist solely to serve men. He also notes that, for centuries, Muslim women had property rights greater than those enjoyed by Western women. However, he does not mention that women in some Arab countries are not allowed to drive cars, vote, or date men of their own choice. He sums up his views on the issue by stating:

It is true that in Western eyes there are problematic aspects to the status of Arab women, just as there are problematic aspects to the status of Western women from an Arab perspective. In the United States and in the 14 Arab nations I have visited, I have come to know women, Muslim and Christian, who are protected, loved, honoured, and respected for being physicians, teachers, journalists, architects, and/or homemakers. We almost never see Arab women portrayed in those roles in the entertainment media, much less anyone modeled after Anwar Sadat's widow, Jihan, whose life is clearly the antithesis of the prevailing stereotype (Shaheen, 1990: B3).

It is nonetheless true that the status of women in Muslim countries must improve if Western cultures are ever to accept Islam as a viable religion. For Westerners, there are too many negative implications associated with being a Muslim woman living in an Arab country. Ancient stories of stoning prostitutes, the whole idea of harem maidens, and a recent case in which an Iranian woman was granted refugee status in

Canada because she had been flogged 35 times with a steel cable for not wearing a veil at a party are just a few examples. The latest Sally Field movie "Not Without My Daughter" is an American (i.e. sensationalized) account of what it is like to be a woman in Iran. The film portrays Muslims and Islam very unfavourably and presents stereotypical roles of Muslim women in marriage (Abu-Laban and Abu-Laban, 1992). After the movie, the viewer must agree that it is probably better to be dead. It is unfortunate that it is usually only tales of Islam and oppression of women, or Islamic fundamentalist violence that make the news, rather than stories about the vast majority of Muslims who lead peaceful lives while worshipping and serving Allah (God).

ii. New "Gulf Specific" Arab Portrayals

According to Jones (1991: A14), "the war in the Persian Gulf has only served to intensify a bias already rooted in the collective psyche of North Americans - that Arabs are innately bad". The media reports give the impression that "Kuwaitis and Saudis are ostentatiously wealthy and too lazy or cowardly to fight their own battles; Iraqis are psychopaths who torture and maim; Palestinians are desperate fanatics who espouse terrorism" (Jones, 1991: A14). During the Gulf crisis, Iraqi president Saddam Hussein filled the role of villain very well indeed, as the Germans, Japanese and Russians had done before him. Jones (1991) offers a description of the way in which

the media showed the Arabs to be the enemy:

Iraqi President Saddam Hussein is cast in the role of the archetypical evil Arab. Everyone's favourite monster. His demonization has proved effortless, made even easier by a Western public ready to believe that Arabs come complete with horns and pitchforks. Although U.S. President George Bush was careful to say that all Arabs should not be judged by the actions of the Iraqi president, he lacked the necessary media backup to make his words plausible. As U.S. Senator Alan Simpson of Wyoming once told Mr. Hussein, his problems lie not with the U.S. government but with the Western media (Jones, 1991: A14).

These "Gulf crisis" stereotypes are not entirely new, but the ones outlined above (of Kuwaitis, Saudis, Iraqis and Palestinians) raise some new possibilities. Many of us wondered aloud what would become of the female American soldier who was captured by the Iraqis near the beginning of the war. Of course, everyone was fearing the worse. She would certainly be raped and tortured, everyone was certain of that, because after all, her captors were Iraqis (psychopaths who torture and maim, "butchers" was also a popular reference). And when the battered faces of the captured Italian, British and American pilots flashed across our television screens, everyone automatically assumed that they had been beaten and tortured by their Iraqi captors, without giving any thought to what a U.S. Air Force spokesman later described as "the tremendous potential for injury to a human body that is ejecting from an aircraft moving at over 600 miles per hour". The Iraqi action of forcing these men to make videotaped speeches is an unforgivable act. Furthermore,

it is outlawed by the Geneva Convention for treatment of prisoners of war.

To further illustrate the stereotype of the "barbaric Iraqi", consider the ABC Sunday Night Movie entitled "Heroes of Desert Storm". Rarely, if ever before, has such a blatant case of "rah-rah" flag-waving American propaganda appeared on television. This is extreme, even for the Americans. The soon to be captured American pilot was shown at the beginning with his family, moving into a new home in California. He was then called for service in the Gulf. Tears flowed among husband, wife and daughter. During the war, his plane was shot down, and subsequently captured by the Iraqis. Everyone in the film, except the actual U.S. military personnel (i.e. the pilot) was an actor. Upon his arrival at an Iraqi base, manned by Iraqi soldiers (actors), most of whom had mustaches and looked like Saddam Hussein, the pilot was confronted by a commander who was a dead ringer for Hussein. The pilot was pushed, shoved, and kicked around the base, until he was forced to make the speech in which he condemned the U.S. for starting a war against "the peaceful people of Iraq". He was returned to a holding cell where he met up with another American pilot, as well as the British and Italian airmen. The Hussein-like commander, a brutish and forceful ape of a man, screaming wildly with a thick Arab accent continued to pester only the original American pilot, even kicking him before leaving the cell. The film was supposed to be based on

the stories of the persons who served in the Gulf. While it is difficult to judge exactly how much of the story is accurate, the Iraqis (actors) in the film are portrayed as subhumans, a group who did nothing but push the American pilot around. As long as material like this continues to appear on television, it shall be a difficult task to dispel negative Arab images from the minds of the public. Throughout the war, U.S. journalists dismissed Iraqi news reports as propaganda, and there is not much doubt that they were. One must wonder then, would they be as quick to denounce "Heroes of Desert Storm" as American propaganda, which similarly perpetuates myths and outright lies, and is misleading to the public? Probably not, because in America this is "entertainment". It creates the "villain of the hour" which is "dependent to a great degree on the headlines that attract public interest and the villain of the hour in America has changed quite frequently" (Bell, cited in Shaheen, 1984: 11).

### iii. Iraqis were Gracious Hosts

The film "Heroes of Desert Storm" was definitely quite predictable, and not just because of its Hollywood, U.S.A. title. The message and images encountered in that film are remarkably different from those encountered in The New York Times, however. This was also quite predictable. The bias against Arabs could be greatly reduced if media images on par with those in the Times appeared more frequently, perhaps even



at all. In this particular case the Times provides a different view of the Arabs, even the so-called Iraqi psychopaths are seen in quite a different light.

One particular feature article is an account of hostages' experiences under Iraqi detainment. First of all, The Geneva Convention outlaws any forced detainment of foreigners, so it must be recognized that the Iraqi actions were a violation of international law, and must be condemned on this basis. The circumstances notwithstanding, the article appeared in the September 2nd edition of The New York Times. One of the hostages was Debbie Willis, an American lawyer who was captured by an Iraqi patrol as she tried to escape across the desert. She was taken to a building with other hostages where, according to Willis, "they treated us very nicely. They gave us soda, water and tea" (NYT, Sept. 2, 1990: Op-Ed pages). Another American, Monterey van Engelen, reported "they were very nice. They cooked for us, gave us fresh fruits and vegetables" (NYT, Sept. 2, 1990: Op-Ed pages). According to van Engelen, the Iraqi captors were "sometimes apologetic and very polite" (NYT, Sept. 2, 1990: Op-Ed pages). Ironically, there was one incident of butchery. It occurred when one of the hostages asked for lamb. The next day, an Iraqi soldier brought a live lamb to the camp, slaughtered and butchered it, then cooked it and served it to the hostages (NYT, Sept. 2, 1990). A Swedish hostage also reported that she did not mind staying in a Baghdad hotel, because she could

sit by the pool and bar all day (NYT, Sept. 2, 1990). Willis also mentioned that one of the soldiers said to her "you invaded Panama and Grenada, we invaded Kuwait" (NYT, Sept. 2, 1990: Op-Ed pages). That sort of justification, albeit a poor one, does not appear on network television. Neither did any debate over whether the U.S. was authorized to carry out such invasions. In Panama, General Manuel Noriega was identified as a drug king and portrayed as such by the American media, in much the same way that Hussein was portrayed as a dictator with Hitleresque ambitions of world conquest. It seems as though the U.S. government's pursuit of such villains makes it "O.K." to step outside the boundaries of international law. The media appears to be managed by the government, and the media is apparently willing to submit to this management (Agenda, March 1991). As a result:

What we get is a very one-sided view of the war, a one-sided view of policy. And it's the side the Bush administration prefers people to be exposed to. As a result the information is quite skewed (Agenda, March 1991: 1).

Or, as George Gerbner has said, "If you can control the storytelling of a nation, you don't have to worry about who makes the laws" (as cited in Shaheen, 1990: B1).

As far as Jones (1991) comment about the media portraying Kuwaitis and Saudis as wealthy cowards who cannot fight their own battles, there was one specific article in the Times that purported this theme. The August 26th "On My Mind" column by A.M. Rosenthal (a regular Times column) had this to say about

the situation:

The Arab coalition is of use now, but it could turn out to be a fatal presence in the Middle East, a prelude to a devastating war against Israel. Unlike the Kuwaiti princelings, the Israelis will not helicopter out. (NYT, Aug. 26, 1990: Op-Ed pages).

This is a totally unwarranted portrayal of Kuwaitis as cowards. Perhaps if Kuwait had even a bit of Israel's massive military might, the "princelings" would not have had to helicopter out. Perhaps if the invasion had not been a surprise, the Kuwaitis could have prepared in some way. The point is, how many options does one have with hostile enemy soldiers and tanks milling around the streets of the capital city, destroying property, killing people at will, and you have absolutely no means of defending yourself? You are fearing for your life, so of course you would helicopter out. This comment shows a clear lack of thought and objectivity on the part of Rosenthal, qualities that pervade his later columns as well. Israeli forces have the power and technology (as has been shown in past conflicts) to rout any country in the region (or countries, as in the October war of 1973), as well as to effectively defend herself in the event of an invasion. With such real threats all around them, they could not afford to have anything less than a superb military machine. National security warrants it, and the Israelis certainly need it. Thus, the Israelis will not helicopter out, because they would not be forced to do so. This is an important point that Rosenthal has missed, while also

suggesting that the Kuwaiti princes' action of escaping by helicopter was somehow a cowardly act.

iv. Taxi Driver - An Arab With a Human Face

In his 1988 Newsweek article, Shaheen laments the fact that "rarely do we see ordinary Arabs practising law, driving taxis, singing lullabies or healing the sick" (Shaheen, 1988: 10). Miller and Woll note that "the movie and television Arabs tend no gardens, nurture no families" (Miller and Woll, 1987: 179). Also, Jones (1991: A14) states that "Arabs are simply not seen in human terms. They are two-dimensional figures, a hodgepodge of misremembered stories from The Arabian Nights." A feature article in the August 23rd edition of The New York Times shows us that Arabs have feelings just like those of any other human being. Arabs have a strong sense of family, and, according to the August 21st editorial in The New York Times, "Arab intellectuals should remind people of the strength of their roots" (NYT, Aug. 23: Op-Ed pages).

The feature article in the August 23rd edition of the Times told of a father's happiness after learning that his two sons had made it safely out of Kuwait following the Iraqi invasion. The man is Egyptian; he is also a taxi driver, an "ordinary" profession that Shaheen (1990) claims Arabs are rarely seen doing (see above paragraph). The article mentions the "tears of joy" shed by the man as he tells his friends at

the sidewalk cafe that his sons were indeed safe. It is a story of human feeling and compassion, basic qualities that the media does not usually link to the Arabs, although Jones insists that "like buried treasure, positive Arab images are hard to find, but persistent digging can yield some rewards" (Jones, 1991: A14). The story of the Egyptian taxi driver is testimony to this.

#### v. Terrorism

The print media, like all other forms of media, should aim to report all events in an unbiased, objective manner. The feature articles and editorials of the New York Times seem to achieve this goal of objectivity. Objective in the sense that while the Arabs are portrayed in a more favourable manner than has been the case throughout history, the Arab world is by no means perfect and trouble-free. In addition to the positive reporting about Arabs and Arab affairs that was discussed above, the New York Times articles mention certain less favourable, problematic aspects of Arab society which cannot be considered slanderous or stereotypical, but which must be accepted as the truth.

The first such example I encountered was in the August 19th editorial. The label of "renegade Palestinian terrorist" was placed on Abu-Nidal. Shaheen (1988: 10) notes that "Palestinian Arabs are a people who traditionally suffered from the myth that Palestinian equals terrorist". This

particular reference to Abu-Nidal is hardly a myth. Abu-Nidal is a renegade Palestinian terrorist, plain and simple. Governments search internationally for him and members of his organization for their part in countless acts of terrorism. During the Gulf crisis, the Mossad (the Israeli Secret Service), the Central Intelligence Agency (U.S.), the German Secret Service, and Interpol (International Police) identified terrorist attacks by the Abu Nidal organization as their number one concern. Security was beefed up at major international transportation hubs in anticipation of such attacks. Thankfully, there were no major incidents, and no lives were lost. The September 13th editorial also identified President Hafez Assad of Syria as a "major supporter of anti-American terrorism" (NYT, Sept. 13, 1990: editorial). This statement, like the one about Abu Nidal, is a documented fact. Assad's hard line government, which in the past received arms and money from the U.S.S.R., has openly supported this kind of terrorism, presumably due to the history of U.S. support for Israel, as well as U.S. intervention in the region. The Nov. 21 editorial of The Globe and Mail offers that "Syria has been trying to purchase advanced ballistic missiles to aim at Israel, while giving sanctuary in Damascus to a well-known terrorist, Ahmed Jibril" (The Globe and Mail, Nov. 21, 1991: A 17). Possibly the most volatile relationship in the Arab-Israeli conflict is between Israel and Syria, deeply rooted in the Golan Heights land controversy, reflected in the fact that

each refused to meet directly with the other at the recent Middle East peace conference in Madrid, Spain. Even the Palestinians and the Israelis engaged in head to head talks, and both sides remain cautiously optimistic about the outcome of future talks. However, the spectre of Arab terrorism remains. U.S. and British authorities have recently identified two high ranking Libyan officials as the engineers of the Pan Am Flight 103 bombing over Lockerbie, Scotland in December, 1988 which killed 270 people (The Windsor Star, Nov. 15, 1991). The U.S. State Department went so far as to say "This was a Libyan government operation from start to finish. We hold the Libyan government directly responsible for the murders of 270 people" (The Windsor Star, Nov. 15, 1991: A1). The article also mentions that the Libyan government has long been branded terrorist by the U.S. The stereotype of not only Palestinian as terrorist (as discussed above) but simply Arab as terrorist is among the most well established in the public eye, because of actual terrorist acts committed by Arabs and the attention that these attacks receive in the media. As long as such incidents of "uncivilized terrorism" (White House spokesman Marlin Fitzwater, quoted in The Windsor Star, Nov. 15, 1991: A1) continue to be committed by Arabs, it will be extremely difficult to make a case for dispelling Arab terrorist stereotypes from the media. An accompanying change in public perception would be equally difficult, if not more so, to achieve. When we speak of Arab terrorists, we are

speaking of the smallest minority of the population, but because of the particularly brutal and savage nature of their acts, the incidents become worthy of international attention, and the feelings of anger and hatred are directed at Arabs in general. Similar feelings exist in North America when the subject is minorities and their involvement in criminal activities. These feelings may include beliefs that all blacks are genetically predisposed to criminality, or that most Asian people are members of criminal gangs known as triads caught up in smuggling drugs, extortion, and murder. As ridiculous as these notions may seem, they are quite well established in our society, largely because they are unusually well covered by the media. Media reports of this type are almost always sure to include the race and/or nationality of the criminals, thereby establishing a link (albeit a false one) between race, colour and crime. As an example, the Irish Republican Army (IRA) has been committing terrorist acts in Britain for years, and hundreds of innocent people have been killed. News coverage of these events is usually relegated to back pages in newspapers, or the middle of news broadcasts. They are rarely headline news. And who among us would ever add "terrorist" to a list of characteristics of Irish people? The Irish are Caucasians, so they are "like" Westerners in this regard. Does the colour of one's skin hold sway in the reporting of events involving one's particular ethnic group? Although there is no accurate measure of the degree to which



ethnicity influences reporting, there is evidence to suggest that there is at least some type of relationship between the two. In the case of the Arabs, based on earlier material reviewed for this essay, we must agree that "wherever knowledge or information about the Arab culture exists, it is usually biased, distorted, and misrepresented" (Shuraydi, 1981: 5).

#### vi. Democracy in the Arab World?

One topic of discussion in the New York Times which seemed to feature a fairly consistent message was that of democracy, or the lack of it in the Arab world. Feature article writer A.M. Rosenthal, whose columns entitled "On My Mind" appear regularly in the New York Times addresses the situation in an August 19th article. He asserts that "Any politically literate American knows that we are not fighting for democracy in the Arab world because there is none. Has there ever been?" (NYT, Sun. Aug. 19, 1990: Op-Ed pages). The editorial in the same edition states that "few Arab regimes have real legitimacy" (NYT, Sun. Aug. 19, 1990: Op-Ed pages). The September 1 edition features an article by Thomas Friedman, in which he quotes Fouad Ajami, an expert on Arab intellectual thought at Johns Hopkins school of Advanced International Studies. Ajami is quoted as saying: "Let's be honest- democracy just isn't on the menu in the Arab world today. What you have is the rule of monarchs or the rule of

tyrants, the rule of kings or the rule of army officers" (Ajami, as cited in NYT, Sept. 1, 1990: Op-Ed pages). These are the words of an Arab-American, a man who knows all too well the nature of governing bodies in the Arab world. Ajami identifies the regimes of Assad in Syria and Hussein in Iraq as ruthless dictatorships, but both countries are classified as republics. We can safely assert that both countries (or practically any other country in the Arab world) do not even vaguely resemble a republic. The author of the feature article, Friedman, refers to Arab states as "feudal regimes" a description which takes us back to the days of poor peasant farmers (serfs) working long hours in the fields to serve the needs of their overlords. Feudal implies a relationship of dominance of the powerful over the weak, the "haves" over the "have nots". As unfavourable as this description may be however, it is, nonetheless, a hard truth about the governments of the Arab world. In fact, the New York Times editorial on Sept. 13th argued that instead of fighting for democracy, the U.S. action of sending troops to the Gulf was actually "protecting monarchies from democracy" (NYT, Sept. 13, 1990, Op-Ed pages).

The next logical step is to provide some statistics which seriously challenge the notion that the U.S. was ever fighting for democracy in the Arab world. Kuwait is a tiny oil rich emirate which gained its independence from Britain in 1961 (New Lexicon Webster's Dictionary, 1988). The al-Sabah

family has ruled Kuwait since the 17th century. The country's administration is almost entirely based in London, England (CNN Newsnight, September, 1990). Before the Gulf crisis, "of Kuwait's population of 2.1 million, only about 826 000 (38%) were Kuwaiti citizens entitled to the benefits of what had been perhaps the world's ultimate welfare state, including free housing, medical care and education through graduate school. But only about 70 000 men were allowed to vote" (NYT, Sunday, Sept. 2, 1990: Op-Ed pages). After the country was liberated by the coalition forces, the international community became sharply critical of the "trial by jury" process in Kuwait. Suspected Iraqi collaborators were rounded up, and tried on numerous charges. One Kuwaiti was imprisoned because he had worn a t-shirt with Saddam Hussein's picture on it. The trials lacked any sort of tribunal justice, according to the U.S. State Department and Amnesty International. Some were executed; some imprisoned indefinitely. Judges refused to hear testimony from certain witnesses. Democracy? Not likely. Yet although Kuwait had never been democratic, the al-Sabah family made some sort of promise to the U.S. that after the Iraqis had been expelled, Kuwait would move toward democratic reform. Whether or not this was a serious promise remains to be seen, but there is certainly a great deal to be done. Democracy is a difficult step to take for a country whose female citizens are not allowed to vote. The fact that there are no political parties in Kuwait offers further

hindrance to democratic reform.

Kuwait is not alone in the Arab world, however. Of the fifteen countries that compose The Arab League, only eight have political parties other than the "ruling party" (PC Globe, 1991). Two of these eight countries, Iraq and Syria, have other political parties, but it is highly unlikely that the other parties have ever appeared on election ballots. In the latest Syrian election, which took place the week of December 1st, 1991, "according to Syrian Interior Minister Mohammad Harba, only 396 of the 6 727 992 registered voters said "no" to the president, who, as usual, was the only candidate" (The Globe and Mail, Dec. 4, 1991: A16). Voters in these countries (actually dictatorships) have no choice. President Assad of Syria has been in power since 1971; Hussein was formally elected president of Iraq in 1979, although his rise to power started long before this, as a young member of the Baath party, using campaigns of terror and wholesale executions of those who dared to oppose him. (PC Globe, 1991). Their style of leadership most closely resembles a dictatorship, not a democratically elected leader. There is no foreseeable threat that these leaders will lose their seats of power through democratic elections. In a literal sense, then, the actual number of countries with political parties drops to six. Of the fifteen countries, eight are classified as republics, five are ruled by monarchs and royal families, one is an Islamic republic, and the other a military state (PC

Globe, 1991). Under the leadership of President Hosni Mubarak, Egypt is considered to be the most democratic of the Arab countries, but even this fact must be taken with some caution. The Egyptian government keeps a tight rein on the media, as well as the activities of all political organizations. This violates the requirement that "freedom of the media is necessary in a democratic structure" (Royal Bank Letter, November/December, 1991). In Arab countries, citizens are afraid to speak out against their governments. There are wide ranging networks of secret government organizations who keep a close eye and ear out for those who say negative things about these governments. During the Gulf crisis, many Iraqis (even those living in other countries) spoke to Western reporters only on terms of complete anonymity, because they feared for their lives, as well as their families'. After the Gulf war, CBC Television ran a documentary on Syria. They examined a Syrian T.V. interview with an elderly man on the street, who praised President Assad for his great leadership. He has built hospitals, schools and roads, and made life better for all Syrians, long live Assad, was the tone of the interview. What CBC Television revealed was that before the interview, the man had been told exactly what to say by a group of three men, two of whom were holding automatic rifles. This does not exactly constitute free speech, another basic element of democracy.

### vii. Concerns for Human Rights

The issue of human rights goes hand in hand with democracy. The Arab world seems to practice neither. In the August 26th "On My Mind" column in The New York Times, A.M. Rosenthal documents numerous human rights abuses in the Arab world. Amnesty International continually identifies some Arab countries as among the worst violators of human rights. T.V. Ontario's documentary "Saddam Hussein's Iraq", shown during the Gulf crisis featured interviews with former victims of imprisonment and torture, as well as families whose members had disappeared under mysterious circumstances. In the August 26th "On My Mind" column, Rosenthal states that he wishes somebody would go to one of those "lavish Saudi embassy parties" in Washington, and bring up the Saudi's deplorable human rights record (NYT, Aug. 26, 1990). The post-war trials in Kuwait drew sharp criticisms from the international community. It will be very difficult to change preconceived ideas about the Arabs as long as human rights abuses continue to take place in Arab countries. Even though it is the dictators and governments who perpetuate human rights violations, the characteristics of these ruling entities are cast upon the society as a whole. Thus, if wrongful imprisonment and torture practised by Arab governments are considered as barbaric and inhumane (which they most certainly are) then Westerners will attach these attributes to Arabs in general (as is already done through stereotypes). In the

West, we need to hear that an Arab person can criticize his/her government without threat of punishment, we need to hear that they can vote for the leader of their choice. Unfortunately, there have been few such reports coming out of Arab countries, because these possibilities do not exist in most of them. The human rights issue is a very serious one. So serious, in fact, that at a recent Commonwealth conference in Harare, Zimbabwe, Canadian Prime Minister Brian Mulroney proposed to link development aid with human rights, and have the countries that violate human rights punished through suspension of aid packages. This has led Canada to review its annual 14 million dollar aid package to Kenya, a country which has put down calls for multi-party democracy, and which regularly violates human rights accords (The Globe and Mail, Nov. 18, 1991). As the world community is finding it increasingly unacceptable to "look the other way" with human rights abuses, countries (including the Arab League) in which it is possible to silence someone's opinion with a gun are starting to feel the pressure.

#### viii. Summary

The early reporting of the New York Times produced some unexpected results. There were many positive statements made about Arabs, their culture, their religion etc. One of the most noticeable and commendable practises was to separate the Iraqi invasion from the Arab world in general. The Times

editors made it clear that Iraq was at fault, and that in no way did this action discredit Arab society as a whole. As readers, we were constantly reminded of the dividing line. In a similar vein, Islam was shown to be a religion that encourages goodwill and hospitality, not violence and aggression, as has so often been demonstrated in the media. The reports of Iraqi kindness toward the hostages (although some may argue that internment of foreigners necessarily negates any kindness), as well as the joy of a father for the return of his two sons portray the Arabs in a new, human light, definitely an exception to the previous media rule.

It must also be recognized that The Times reported on less favourable aspects of Arab society. Numerous references were made to terrorism, dictatorship and lack of democracy. Clearly, these are issues that warrant attention, especially if the Arabs are to be seen in a more positive way. One writer, A.M. Rosenthal, was noticeably more critical of Arab society than were his counterparts, but his arguments about the lack of both democracy and respect for human rights were quite accurate. The end result of this early reporting is that a noticeably greater balance has been achieved, where, according to Shaheen (1984, 1988, 1990), Said (1974), Suleiman (1974, 1982, 1988), Ghareeb (1977), Jones (1991), Terry (1973) and others report that it did not exist before.



#### CHAPTER IV: OCTOBER 1 - 16

##### i. Brutal Leaders

A common thread running through the Times reporting is the brutal nature of Arab regimes, most notably Iraq and Syria. In the October 2nd "On My Mind" column, A.M. Rosenthal notes that both Syrian president Assad and his Iraqi counterpart Hussein are dictators who "murder and torture their own people, invade their neighbours, swear death on Israel, train terrorist groups and send them to foreign lands" (NYT, Oct. 2, 1990: Op-Ed pages). Rosenthal questions why Hussein is condemned while Assad is courted by the United States as part of the new world order. Rosenthal claims that "both are creatures of the only form of society the Arab Middle East has ever known - dictatorship" (NYT, Oct. 2, 1990: Op-Ed pages). Rosenthal describes Syrian backed terrorism, including the bombing of flight 103 over Lockerbie, Scotland (although now it appears to have been a Libyan operation) as well as terrorist acts committed by the Palestinian terror gang headed by Ahmed Jibril. Rosenthal suggests that Assad's "river of blood" is ignored by the U.S. in order to pacify him. Syria's involvement in the international drug trade is also well documented. Apparently, the U.S. State Department has chosen to overlook this as well. As was discussed earlier, these two leaders are in fact dictators, and Rosenthal's argument, notwithstanding his true motivation, is

a good one, questioning the double standard of the U.S. State Department. Again, there is an attempt to make a connection between Arabs and terrorism. In an article concerning Iraq and Syria, the Palestinians are once again associated with terrorism. A later article in the Times documents Syria's "drugs for terror" business in the Bekaa valley, and how the U.S. government has been forced to overlook "blatant Syrian lies about the country's involvement in terrorism and drug running" (NYT, Oct. 28, 1990: Op-Ed pages). Assad's nephew has been videotaped at a Cyprus hotel while meeting with Colombian drug lord Pablo Escobar. The Times takes a very hard stance against both Iraq and Syria and repeatedly denounces the fact that "we court Syria just like we courted Iraq until it invaded Kuwait - the lesser of two evils" (NYT, Oct. 28, 1990: Op-Ed pages).

#### ii. Islam Explained

The Oct. 7th issue of the Times contained an article which addressed the concept of Islamic jihad, or holy war. Saddam Hussein called for all Arabs to engage in jihad against the Western invaders. According to the article's author P. Steinfels "drawing on deep Western stereotypes, Islam was pictured as inevitably fanatical, warlike, monolithic and anti-Western" (NYT, Oct. 7, 1990: Op-Ed pages). The article does much to debunk these deep stereotypes. John L. Esposito, director of the Centre for International Studies at Holy Cross

University says that "it is important to show that Muslim feelings are not irrational or rooted in some rage or genetic rejection of the West, but based on real experiences and history" (NYT, Oct. 7, 1990: Op-Ed pages). Steinfels points out the fact that "many scholars agree that the religious feelings that drive Islam's condemnation of the West cannot be separated from its sense of having being wronged by Western powers since WW I through colonization, support for Israel and now the presence of troops that many Arabs see as something akin to a new occupation" (NYT, Oct. 7, 1990: Op-Ed pages). Islam is also compared favourably with other religions, even the American ideal of Manifest Destiny. Steinfels reports that "like other rich religious traditions, Islam is open to sharply contrasting interpretations" and that "the Muslim jihad is not unlike America's Manifest Destiny, or the belief that God is on our side" (NYT, Oct. 7, 1990: Op-Ed pages). Many Westerners misinterpreted what jihad actually means to the Muslims, thinking that the term 'holy war', with the emphasis on war, was self explanatory. However, jihad means something almost completely different. Steinfels writes:

Jihad is traditionally limited to strictly defensive warfare, while including in it all kinds of peaceful efforts to spread the faith. Today, some emphasize what Mohammed called the 'greater jihad', the individual's lifelong spiritual struggle to resist temptation and live morally (NYT, Oct. 7, 1990: Op-Ed pages).

When, if ever, has the public been presented with information that shows jihad as being peaceful? On virtually every

occasion that jihad was mentioned during the Gulf crisis, the rough English translation 'holy war' was attached to it, and there can be little doubt that the meaning was taken literally by most Westerners, thereby equating jihad with violence. Steinfels does acknowledge another interpretation of jihad however, stating that "Muslim nationalists from Lebanon to Afghanistan retain the term's military connotation, and for unquestioning believers to die in a jihad still means martyrdom and assured salvation" (NYT, Oct. 7, 1990: Op-Ed pages). This is unquestionably true, but as with all stereotypes, it is not characteristic of the overwhelming majority of the population. Steinfels' article also discusses common stereotypes, not just of Islam, but those held by Muslims with regard to Western society. He describes the efforts of Western Muslims who "want to correct the Muslim world's widely held stereotype of the West as 'just a place of nightclubs and pornography', and the West's stereotype of Muslims as 'hostile people from another planet or the Middle Ages" (NYT, Oct. 7, 1990: Op-Ed pages). This article clearly demonstrates that objective journalism regarding Islam is indeed possible. If both sides of any story involving minorities were to be reported in the manner in which Steinfels has done so, great steps could be made toward the elimination of harmful stereotypes.

### iii. The Arab Nightmare

In his October 9th "On My Mind" column, A.M. Rosenthal discusses "The Arab Nightmare". This nightmare is the survival of Saddam Hussein. He discusses the possibility of war, and the notion that Israel is the only foreign country that wants a war. Rosenthal claims that this is "a lie kept aboil by Israel-haters of the American right and left" (NYT, Oct. 9, 1990: Op-Ed pages). He adds that "the Israeli government favours military action, but not joyfully, and not just with its mouth" (NYT, Oct. 9, 1990: Op-Ed pages). This most certainly is true, considering the danger that Israel faces from Hussein. However, while making these statements in Israel's defence, Rosenthal's writing has the effect of making Arabs seem like corrupt, cowardly people. Given his obvious political agenda, this is no accident. His hardline condemnations of Syria and Iraq are sound, based upon accounts of terrorism, genocide, human rights violations and drug smuggling. However, his other arguments are questionable. He suggests that if Hussein remains in power, the other Arab states would buy him off with oil billions to keep him quiet. Rosenthal's earlier article, discussed in Chapter 3, portrayed the Kuwaitis as cowards for helicoptering out of Kuwait during the invasion. The general feeling coming from Rosenthal is that the Arabs will not fight, and if they cannot buy what they want, then they will run to the West for help. Rosenthal is correct when he speaks of corrupt Arab dictatorships and

ruthless regimes, but he does not mention ordinary Arab citizens, who, like the Israelis, are threatened by these dictators.

#### iv. Arab Voices Heard

In his October 14th article, Youssef Ibrahim, a regular contributor to the Times, describes how Arab societies are undergoing slow but profound change. Ibrahim notes that the "passions inflamed by the crisis and Temple Mount killings opened the way for a muzzled press to touch upon subjects once taboo, ranging from corruption to the status of women in Arab societies" (NYT, Oct. 14, 1990: Op-Ed pages). The Arabs are speaking out against the wrongs of their societies. Ibrahim quotes Egyptian columnist Mahmoud al-Saadani:

All Arab countries have neither a stable political logic nor an identifiable political creed. They are more like a circus with no manager in charge. Sometimes they are moved by regional interests; sometimes by class interests or clan interests. In the end it is all crass interests and nothing else (NYT, Oct. 14, 1990: Op-Ed pages).

Such freedom of expression represents a major breakthrough for the Arab world, whose citizens realize that speaking out against their governments can mean imprisonment, torture, even death. Ibrahim notes that a "revolt against their governments has been under way for some time among all Arabs" (NYT, Oct. 14, 1990: Op-Ed pages). The 'backward' notion of Arab society discussed in the literature review comes to mind here (recall Suleiman, 1982), as we speak of a society ruled by kings and

dictators. However, it is these very leaders who are the greatest impediment to democracy in Arab countries. Ibrahim states:

Arabs have been longing for change, any change in the prevailing situation. But in absence of leadership that could inspire this change in a peaceful way, the immediate result has been disarray across the Arab landscape and a chaos verging on war (NYT, Oct. 14, 1990: Op-Ed pages).

According to Ibrahim, the Arab people are not blind to the actions of their leaders. He says that "Arabs know their leaders have become bankrupt and that Arab ideological and political structures must be swept aside to make room for the 21st century" (NYT, Oct. 14, 1990: Op-Ed pages). Thus, as with all stereotypes, the actions of a few become representative of the rest of the group. The corrupt, brutal nature of many Arab regimes overshadows the fact that the Arab people, like any other people, want simply to live their lives in peace and harmony.

#### v. Summary

The Times reporting of October 1 - 16 proved to be relatively favourable for the Arabs. The inevitable comparisons were drawn between Iraq and Syria, with A.M. Rosenthal maintaining his harsh, critical tone against these Arab countries (or more properly, their leaders). However, one feature article described Islamic jihad for what it really is, and not just the loose English translation of 'holy war'. It also compared Islam to other rich religious traditions.

Finally, Ibrahim's feature article documents the growing dissatisfaction that Arab civilians feel toward their non-democratic governments, with the lingering hope that some of these governments may be starting to listen.



## CHAPTER V: OCTOBER 17 - 30

### i. Iraqi "Barbarism"

As mentioned previously, Jones (1991) maintains that the media coverage of the Gulf crisis has brought about some depictions of Arabs which are either new or reinforcements of established ones. In particular, Jones states that Iraqis have been portrayed as psychopaths who torture and maim. This statement proved to be largely untrue in the early reporting of the Times, as many incidents of Iraqi hospitality were documented. However, during the week of October 23, the word "barbarism" was associated with the Iraqis more than once, along with descriptions of particularly cruel and sadistic behaviour.

In his October 23rd column article entitled "War Now or War Later", Daniel Pipes, director of the Foreign Policy Research Institute in the U.S., notes that "incidents of Iraqi barbarism in Kuwait" are just one justification for the United States to go to war (NYT, Oct. 23, 1990: Op-Ed pages). In the same issue of the Times, Thomas Friedman quotes James Baker, the U.S. Secretary of State:

It is a story of barbarism in its most crude and evil form, the rape of Kuwait. Many of the reports seem unbelievable. There is a report of a couple taking two sick children to the hospital. On their way, they were stopped at an Iraqi checkpoint and when they asked for mercy, the Iraqi soldier summarily shot their children, 'curing them' in his words. At the Kuwait Zoo, Iraqi soldiers released the lions and tigers, and then tried to shoot them for target practice. Their efforts, however, were

not completely successful. A lion escaped and mauled a young Kuwaiti girl (James Baker, as quoted in the NYT, October 23, 1990: Op-Ed pages).

These are indeed deplorable incidents, far different from the ones cited earlier in which friendly Iraqi soldiers provided comfortable accommodation and fresh foods to the hostages. One year later, in view of the smart manipulation of the media by public relations companies, hired and paid handsomely by Kuwaitis, it is difficult to verify the truth of these cruel incidents. On the subject of hostages, the Times offers further documentation of good treatment by Iraqi captors, as well as a tale that was believed to be the first of its kind reported to journalists.

A special to the Times article in the October 30 edition entitled "A Freed British Hostage Tells of Sadistic Guards" described both favourable and unfavourable treatment of hostages by Iraqi guards. According to journalist Sheila Rule, the report given by Briton Jim Thomson was the first to allege Iraqi mistreatment of foreigners since Baghdad moved about 700 foreign detainees to strategic sites in Iraq, the aim being to deter a possible allied military attack. Initially, said Thomson, he was taken to a chemical weapons factory where hostages were "generally well treated and received good accommodation" (NYT, Oct. 30, 1990: Op-Ed pages). Later, Thomson was moved to "an armaments factory about the same distance from the capital (as the chemical weapons factory) which was disgusting" (NYT, Oct. 30, 1990:

Op-Ed pages). He also had this to say about his experience:

There were no toilets. The food consisted of rice and tomato water which we discovered we were supposed to use to help soften the stale bread we were fed. We had sadistic guards who would punch the hostages just for the sake of it, although I was never hit myself (NYT, Oct. 30, 1990: Op-Ed pages).

Another British hostage at the same facility said he felt "very, very confined, although we were not abused in any way" (NYT, Oct. 30, 1990: Op-Ed pages). Thomson also said that after a small riot in which the hostages smashed windows and chanted 'Down! Down! Saddam!', the Iraqis went after the ringleaders (Thomson was one) and moved them elsewhere. He considered himself "fortunate, because instead of punishment they moved me to an atomic centre where we had good food and treatment" (NYT, Oct. 30, 1991: Op-Ed pages). The general theme coming out of the hostage reports reviewed thus far is one of relatively good treatment and access to decent food. It appears as though most of the hostages were much better fed than the Iraqi troops who occupied Kuwait. It has been said that many of these men surrendered in order to get a meal from their allied captors. If we consider the earlier reports by American hostages (covered in the "Early Reporting" chapter) as well as the overall favourable treatment of hostages reported by Thomson, we must conclude that, up to this point anyway, the incidents of mistreatment by "sadistic guards" were very small in number. Certainly, if there were more incidents of hostage abuse they would have drawn far more

media coverage, both in the Times and other sources. Reports of favourable treatment have vastly outweighed reports of mistreatment, as the report given by Thomson is the only one that has alleged mistreatment of the hostages.

ii. Palestinian Terrorism

The October 30th edition of the Times carried a feature article which stated that:

Saudi Arabia has reported that armed Palestinians from the Abul Abbas organization have entered Kuwait and are helping Iraqi troops on internal security and border patrols. The group, which carried out the Achille Lauro hijacking in 1985 is affiliated with the PLO and is now based in Iraq (NYT, Oct. 30, 1990: Op-Ed pages).

The Palestinians were maligned during the Gulf crisis for their support of Saddam Hussein, which at times took the form of anti-American rallies. The previous quote is consistent with the media coverage afforded to the Palestinians. It links them with terrorism, it establishes a connection between the PLO and terrorism, and in this particular instance, it allies them with Iraq, a certain death knell for all Palestinians hoping to improve their lives in the future. Many argue that, in the eyes of the international community, the Palestinians took several steps backward by showing support for Iraq, undoing any progress that may have been made to that point. It is difficult to argue this point. However, it is easy to argue for a more balanced portrayal of Palestinians in all forms of media. While there is no doubt

that some Palestinians are involved in terrorism, this is by no means representative of the overwhelming majority of their people. Yet, in the media, the Palestinians are constantly associated with violent terrorist acts. According to Shaheen:

The Palestinian-as-terrorist stereotype has evolved over a period of four decades. There are numerous similarities between the savage American Indian depicted in early Westerns and the dehumanized Palestinian portrayed in current movie dramas. In the 1980's, 10 of the 11 feature films that focused on the Palestinian portrayed him as Enemy Number One. Producers selectively frame the Palestinian as a demonic beast with neither compunction nor compassion, who abducts, abuses, and butchers men, women and children (Shaheen, 1990: B1).

Shaheen (1990) laments the fact that because of media images such as these, it is largely forgotten that the great majority of Palestinians, like all other human beings, seek peace and abhor violence. Almost exclusively appearing as purveyors of violence adorned in fatigues and kuffiyehs, the Palestinians are rarely shown as victims of violence or even as normal human beings. When, if ever, has the viewer seen a Palestinian embracing his wife or children, writing poetry, or doing anything that other "normal" people do? (Shaheen, 1990) There are two sides to every story, and traditionally, the Palestinian side has been muffled, distorted or omitted by the Western media. Due to the high international profile that the Palestinians command, resulting largely from their part in the Arab-Israeli conflict, and the lack of balance inherent in the associated reporting, it must be realized that this is one area of the media that requires a great deal of improvement.

This is not to say that incidents of Palestinian violence should not be reported, just that reporting of such incidents should be balanced with positive stories about the Palestinians. As journalist Edward R. Murrow said "what we do not see is often as important, if not more important, than what we do see" (Shaheen, 1990: B3).

### iii. A Lack of Understanding

In the October 28th issue of the Times Thomas Friedman's article "A Dreamlike Landscape, A Dreamlike Reality" provides valuable insight into the problem of understanding the intricate workings of the Middle East. During the Gulf crisis American officials became upset with Saudi Arabia over the latter's comments stating that some sort of deal could be worked out with Hussein, and that the unconditional withdrawal that the Americans sought may not be necessary. According to Friedman:

This incident reminds Bush administration officials how little they really know about the part of the world to which they have committed more than a quarter of a million troops .... The administration has no senior Arabic speaking policymaker anywhere near the President .... Speaking Arabic, though, and living in the region is no guarantee for understanding it. The most naive readings of Hussein come from Arabic and non-Arabic speakers alike (NYT, Oct. 28, 1990: Op-Ed pages).

In the same article, Friedman quotes Richard W. Murphy, the former Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs who put the problem more bluntly, saying "Reading the Arab world is not one of our national skills. It is simply not

something Americans have been called upon to do very much" (NYT, Oct. 28, 1990: Op-Ed pages). This statement applies not only at the level of the U.S. government, but to everyday civilian America as well. It is a major contention of this thesis that much of the responsibility for Arab stereotypes can be attributed to misunderstanding and a lack of information, a collective 'misreading' of the situation in the Middle East. Government officials are guilty of it; the general public is guilty as well. There is, however, a belief among most Americans that the "Arab world is dark and mysterious, an illusion heightened by years of misrepresentation in the mass media" (D. O'Brien, quoted in Shaheen, 1984: Back Cover). The August 21st editorial of the Times stated that "the turmoil of the Arab world is considered deep and intricate" (NYT, Aug. 21, 1990: Op-Ed pages), and Robert Strauss, former Carter envoy to the region had this to say about the 'shifting sands' idea:

God knows who talked to whom out in that sand, and who met with whom, and who said what to whom, and who cut a deal with whom. You don't have a clue, because when you wake up in the morning, the sand has covered all the tracks and it all just looks the same (NYT, Oct. 28, 1990: Op-Ed pages).

Politics in the Middle East share little with Western ideals. According to Friedman, the inclination in Arab political life is never totally cut off one's enemy (NYT, Oct. 28, 1990). The saying in Arab politics which reflects this tendency is "too soft and you will be squeezed, too hard and you will be broken" (NYT, Oct. 28, 1990: Op-Ed pages). Friedman uses the

example of Saddam Hussein to illustrate this point:

To the Americans, Hussein is like Hitler, but to the Arabs he is something far less absolutely evil and far more familiar - a thief and a bully. With a Hitler there can be nothing but a fight to the death, but with a thief there can always be parole or even a pardon (NYT, Oct. 28, 1990: Op-Ed pages).

Some Arabs (most notably the Palestinians) praised Hussein for standing up to Western interference in the region. Some thought it would finally make Arab voices heard. Some even applauded this action because they felt that the oil-rich Kuwaitis were not sharing the wealth with the other Arab countries. While an armed invasion of another country is a deplorable act of violence and aggression and constitutes an atrocious crime against humanity, there are those who saw merit in it. The Western media was consistent with its portrayal of Hussein as a crazed, demonic dictator, who, in effect, was the second coming of Hitler. Consequently, this is the view that the vast majority of the Western world came to accept. Apparently, any view of Hussein that diverged from this one did not matter, as none were presented by the media. Thus, again, we can see how problems of understanding continue to bias the Western world against the Arabs. Western cultures wrought with ethnocentrism suffer the same problem when judging any country or people that do not share Western ideals.



#### iv. Summary

The week of October 23-30 in the Times featured the first report of hostage mistreatment in Iraq. It also featured more reports of good accommodations and food for the hostages. The word 'barbaric' was associated with the Iraqis on three separate occasions, lending support to Jones (1991) contention that the media coverage of the crisis gives the impression that Iraqis are psychopaths who torture and maim. The familiar association of Palestinians with terrorism without any positive counterbalances is cause for concern. Thomas Friedman suggests, quite accurately, that Americans at all levels of society know very little about the Arab world and its people. This misunderstanding both enrages and baffles government officials, and assists ordinary citizens in making stereotypical characterizations. His description of Arab politics and their conflict with the ideals of the Western world gives some credit to the idea that negative stereotypes arise as a result of distorted or incomplete information.

## CHAPTER VI: NOVEMBER 1 - 30

The Times reporting during the month of November was largely focused on the possible outbreak of war. There were less editorials and feature articles relating to Arabs in particular; more space was devoted to the decisions facing the United States and its allies. The budgetary crisis in the United States was the main topic of discussion. Nonetheless, some important articles did appear during this period. The following is a review of these articles:

### i. Familiar Words for Saddam

Predictably, the reporting on President Saddam Hussein in all forms of media has been negative. This is the result of his unquestionably brutal leadership, as well as the need to create a 'villain of the hour' in the U.S. A feature article in the November 4th edition of the Times echoes earlier remarks. The article states that "Saddam's has been a life of menace and manipulation" (NYT, Nov. 4, 1990: Op-Ed pages). In saying that the Godfather is his favourite Western movie, the article likens him to movie crime boss Don Corleone. This is an accurate comparison, as the article cites Saddam's close network of family and hometown boys that provide protection, and a willingness to carry out his every wish. The article also notes that Saddam has "developed a personality cult of Stalinist proportions" (NYT, Nov. 4, 1990: Op-Ed pages). The

comparison between Saddam and a man synonymous with Communism (an idea that Americans despise) undoubtedly adds to the aura of evil surrounding the Iraqi president. Of course, a similar parallel would not be drawn between John Fitzgerald Kennedy and Saddam, even though Kennedy's name would be more familiar to Americans, and most know of the incredible cult of personality he enjoyed. The Iraqi president's life has been a river of blood, however, and it should be (and is) reported as such.

ii. Rosenthal Growing Impatient

As the possibility of war increases, so does columnist A.M. Rosenthal's intransigence. In his November 6th "On My Mind" column entitled "The Iraqi Nightmare" (recall his earlier column, "The Arab Nightmare") it is clear that Rosenthal supports a forceful U.S. response to Saddam Hussein and his occupation of Kuwait. As he has done earlier, he notes the glaring faults in U.S. policy that allowed the situation to unfold:

Sadly, the errors of American policy that did so much to create the Saddam Hussein nightmare have not been faced in the daylight by our leaders. Saddam is a neighbourhood killer who rose to regional power with the help of Arab governments that did not care what he did, as long as he left their own necks unslit (NYT, Nov. 6, 1990: Op-Ed pages).

He also states that the "brutality, weakness and corruption of our Arab allies create the problem of the Middle East" (NYT, Nov. 6, 1990: Op-Ed pages). There is no mention of Israel

when problems of the Middle East are discussed. Quite the contrary, Rosenthal assails President George Bush for delaying the start of a forceful response, saying "does he (Bush) want to wait until Saddam Hussein actually develops nuclear bombs and then ask the Israelis to go get him again - if they can" (NYT, Nov. 6, 1990: Op-Ed pages). The 'again' refers to Israel's destruction of the Iraqi nuclear reactor in 1981. Given the scope of Iraq's nuclear program, uncovered by U.N. inspectors after the war, the Israeli action seems warranted. However, Rosenthal is openly calling for armed conflict at present. The international community did not share Rosenthal's desire for the personal elimination of Saddam. Rosenthal is overstepping his bounds as a newspaper columnist. True, there have been definite cases of a double standard where U.S. policy toward Saddam Hussein is concerned, but there are similar examples in the entire Arab-Israeli conflict. So in effect, Rosenthal is guilty of his own double standard. It must be noted here that Rosenthal does present some excellent arguments. His columns are very straightforward and to the point, and his facts do not lie. Occasionally, however, his zeal is misdirected against the Arabs which may serve to reinforce inaccurate stereotypes.

### iii. Arabs Growing Impatient

One of the most difficult obstacles for Westerners to overcome with regard to the Arabs is that the Arab world is

seen to be the antithesis of Western society. It is difficult to change these perceptions when the media provides stories of terrorism, dictatorships, unequal status of women and the like. One 'theory' that has come to light is that the Arabs must enjoy living in corruption, because there have been no popular revolts against it. Why are the tyrannical few permitted to rule over so many? Those who advance this theory point to the 1989 student revolution for democracy in China, similar revolts in Korea, the overthrow of Nikolai Ceaucescu's dictatorship in Rumania, any number of such incidents where the masses have risen up and fought for what they believe in. One reason is that in the wealthier countries, the Arab leaders usually provide for their people. Before the war, Iraq was a modern, industrialized country with a health care system that put many developed nations to shame. Iraq was producing 120% of its own food requirements (Iraq: One Year Later, CNN Network, January, 1992). Kuwait has been called "the world's ultimate welfare state" with free education through university, housing and medical care. Despite his record of bloodshed, it is widely acknowledged that Saddam Hussein did a great deal for the people of Iraq. The same can be said for Adolf Hitler, whose Third Reich stamped out runaway inflation in Germany and started an industrialization period that restored prosperity to the impoverished country. Obviously, the citizens of all these countries have been forced to look the other way. Somehow, the atrocities

committed by these leaders seem to lose their sting for individuals when there is employment to be had and food on the table. Also, voices of dissent are not well received. In the Arab countries, political dissidents are imprisoned, tortured and perhaps even killed. Traditionally, it was not in an Arab individual's best interest to speak out against the government. But even this steadfast rule was bent during the Gulf crisis, as the article entitled "Impatiently, Arabs Await New Order in the Gulf" explains.

The article appeared in the November 11th edition of the Times, and was penned by Youssef Ibrahim. Above all, the article describes the Arab desire for peace and democracy. Arabs, like any other people, are not as a rule blood-thirsty, war-like, cruel or hostile. Ibrahim states that the Arabs have "a dream of greater freedom, affirmed with acts of protest that only a few months ago would have been unthinkable" (NYT, Nov. 11, 1990: Op-Ed pages). He notes that things are changing quickly. One specific incident is recounted:

In an astounding challenge to Saudi authorities and male dominated culture, 70 Saudi women dismissed their drivers and drove across Riyadh in broad daylight. Even after their arrest, they vowed to repeat their action until the ban on women driving is lifted. Of equal significance, their husbands, brothers and male relatives backed them up (NYT, Nov. 11, 1990: Op-Ed pages).

Ibrahim reports that the rulers are beginning to respond to their subjects' quests for greater freedom. However, the official Saudi reaction was less than encouraging. The Saudi

government responded to the incident by re-affirming that "women are strictly not allowed to drive cars in the kingdom and anyone violating this prohibition is liable to deterrent punishment" (NYT, Nov. 15, 1990: A19). Saudi Arabia is the most conservative, most traditionally Muslim of the Arab countries, and Saudi officials noted that driving by women contradicts the Islamic traditions followed by Saudi citizens (NYT, Nov. 15, 1990). Many Arabs, noting the fact that women are permitted to drive in every other Arab country, criticize the Royal family for not modernizing quickly enough. Speaking of modernization, Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Saud al-Faisal identifies his nation's place in the 'new world order' stating that "in the final analysis, our Arab world cannot be excluded from the accelerating new trends which are altering the balance of relations between states, nations and peoples. We all have one objective, which is a decent life for the Arab individual" (NYT, Nov. 11, 1990: Op-Ed pages). These could be the words of any Foreign Minister, an expression of hope for the future.

#### iv. Jew and Arab Living in Peace

In November 1990, in New York City, ultra-right wing Rabbi Meir Kahane was murdered by a man of Arab descent. Many felt that it was a form of revenge for the Temple Mount killings, which occurred about a month earlier. Rather than just accepting the Kahane slaying as inevitable, Bernard

Avishai, a self-proclaimed "left-wing Zionist" in his youth, says that Arabs and Jews must try to achieve peace. He points to the genuine efforts of all but the most right wing Israelis and Palestinian extremists in finding an acceptable solution. We are familiar with Palestinian terrorism, but we may not be as familiar with the politics of Kahane. He was the leader of a following who denied the existence of the Palestinians while calling for their unconditional expulsion from Israel, in order that more Jews be accommodated. This is not representative of the sentiments of the majority of Israelis, but just as with Palestinian terrorists, small groups do exist. According to Avishai, "Rabbi Meir Kahane's politics and the politics of Palestinian extremists have overwhelmed political movements for democratic co-existence" (NYT, Nov. 13, 1990: Op-Ed pages). He suggests that an Arab-Israeli security arrangement be proposed, noting that "together, they have the technological and human assets to turn their joint homeland into an economic equivalent of Singapore" (NYT, Nov. 13, 1990: Op-Ed pages). It is encouraging not only to hear this call for peace, but also to read both sides of the story. We have heard of PLO chairman Yasser Arafat's links to terrorism, but how many of us knew of Rabbi Meir Kahane's plan for the Palestinians, let alone have even heard his name? How many of us know that the present Prime Minister of Israel, Yitzhak Shamir, was a former terrorist wanted in Europe, as was past Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin? Many of the



Arab writers encountered so far fail to give the Israeli side of the story; many of the Jewish writers neglect the Arabs. Each side is as guilty as the other. Avishai, a Jew, breaks important ground by identifying the extremists on both sides as being the true obstacle to peace.

v. Rosenthal Still Waiting

In his November 13 "On My Mind" column, A.M. Rosenthal again makes an impassioned plea to the U.S. and the rest of the world - "stop this man before he kills millions" (NYT, Nov. 13, 1990: Op-Ed pages). He suggests that Saddam would have already done so, but "if Israeli destruction of his nuclear plant in 1981 had not set him back a decade or so, Iraq would be a nuclear power today" (NYT, Nov. 13, 1990: Op-Ed pages). This is probably an accurate assessment. However, there is no clear evidence that Hussein, even if he did have nuclear capabilities, was out to kill millions. A year after the war, there are reports that Iraq was making a slow withdrawal from Kuwait (The Globe and Mail, January 16, 1990). Rosenthal's concerns are well founded, but he is a little bit too anxious for conflict. His portrayal of Israel as "the angel next door" is also worthy of note, because this speaks volumes about his one-sided views while seriously damaging his credibility as an objective journalist.

vi. A Senator Speaks Out

U.S. Senator Sam Nunn is Chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee. In his Nov. 18th letter to the Times entitled "The Gulf Isn't the Only Crisis" he describes problems that plague the Arab world; most have already been discussed. Nunn warns that "at the moment, there is neither a genuine working Arab democracy, nor any significant regional economic co-operation among them" (NYT, Nov. 18, 1990: Op-Ed pages). He also states that the Arab states need democracy, and points to the wide gap between the 'haves' and the 'have nots' in Arab countries. Nunn should be careful with this sort of statement, because while democracy is certainly the best political system for the people, Nunn's own country is testimony to the fact that it does not do much to bridge the gap between the 'haves' and the 'have nots'. He is taking a step in the right direction by encouraging democratic reform for the Arabs, as well as suggesting that economic co-operation could benefit the region.

vii. Five Missing Words in 'The Arab Middle East

In the November 20th "On My Mind" column, A.M. Rosenthal notes that five words have been missing from the discussion of the future of the Arab Middle East. These are political freedom, democracy and human rights (NYT, Nov. 20, 1990). Rosenthal has some harsh criticisms of the Arab world:

Of course the United States knows that most of its Arab allies are state of the art tyrannies. In

Saudi Arabia, women are chattel, religious or political dissent is punishable by imprisonment or death. It will take years before political freedom has a chance in the Middle East, because Arab rulers stamp out any opposition they discover (NYT, Nov. 20, 1990: Op-Ed pages).

Interestingly, the 'women are chattel' description is identified as an inaccurate stereotype by Shaheen (1990). And the article by Ibrahim, reviewed in section iii. above, shows that Arabs are slowly beginning to speak out against their governments. So political freedom, a long time in coming, may be starting to sprout in Arab countries. The article refers to "political murder, torture and imprisonment in Arab countries" (NYT, Nov. 20, 1990: Op-Ed pages). Again, these atrocities have taken place in Arab society for some time now. Hopefully, the 'new world order' will end these human rights abuses in Arab countries. However, we must be careful not to identify all Arabs as murderous abusers of human rights, even though such words are generally associated with them. We need to separate the actions of brutal regimes and those of ordinary citizens living in them. We must not let the actions of a select few speak for an entire people.

#### viii. Assad vs. Hussein

While Saddam Hussein and Iraq drew most of the attention during the Gulf crisis, Hafez al-Assad and Syria were a close second. In his November 25th article in the Times, John Kifner asks the reader to:

Name an Arab leader whose name is virtually

synonymous with ruthless tyranny, whose rule, carried out by a small circle of hometown cronies and family members is based on fear backed up by seemingly ubiquitous secret police and torture; who has not hesitated to kill tens of thousands of his own citizens; who harbours terrorists, and who, after long coveting a weaker neighbour, recently sent his troops rampaging through that country's national palace (NYT, Nov. 25, 1990: Op-Ed pages).

The answer is, of course, Saddam Hussein. The less obvious answer is Assad. Both men have performed exactly the deeds described by Kifner, yet Assad goes without reprimand. This is one of many articles expressing displeasure with the double standard of the U.S. State Department. Kifner says this is so because Assad is the "smoother of two evils" (NYT, Nov. 25, 1990: Op-Ed pages). He quotes Andrew Whitley of Middle East Watch, a human rights group which issued a chilling report on Syria. Whitley says "if I had to sum up Hussein, I'd say he is a back street brawler, whereas his nemesis (Assad) is a man who while pursuing his own goals puts himself at a lofty distance from conduct that is akin to Iraq" (NYT, Nov. 25, 1990: Op-Ed pages). Indeed, in the Times, the tyrannical rule of terror by Syria's Assad is well documented and sharply assailed. Syrian involvement in terrorism and drug running is highlighted on several occasions. We become aware that Assad is guilty of the same type of actions as Hussein, but we are told that the U.S. has done nothing to discourage him. This is a sore point with the writers. Hence, here is another Arab 'villain', as ruthless as the despised Saddam Hussein.

viv. Rosenthal on Assad

Columnist A.M. Rosenthal has been the Times' harshest critic of the ruling bodies in the Arab world. In his Nov. 27th "On My Mind" column, Rosenthal outlines Assad's atrocities yet again. However, Rosenthal says that Assad is the first victor in the Gulf, because the U.S. has been forced to embrace Syria in the hopes of keeping the coalition force together. Rosenthal says that "once again, the U.S. is pandering to a Middle East dictator" (NYT, Nov. 27, 1990: Op-Ed pages). He also notes that Assad has won praise and prestige from the U.S., who list his country as a terrorist nation (NYT, Nov. 27, 1990). Rosenthal is fearful of what will happen after the Gulf crisis, asserting that "with Hussein gone, Assad is the major power. He will try to use that power to lead a crusade to annihilate Israel and destroy the influence of Western allies" (NYT, Nov. 27, 1990: Op-Ed pages). Again, Rosenthal points out that Israel is in danger. As it stands right now, Israel is the only country in the Middle East to possess nuclear weapons, and most strategists believe that this is an effective deterrent to any serious threat that may be put forward by Arab neighbours. However, Rosenthal never mentions anything like this. His personal hatred of Assad and Hussein is perfectly understandable; he is not the only one who feels this way. As mentioned before, his feelings sometimes escalate to a level where he suggests things will actually happen in the future, when the

possibility of such occurrences is extremely low. It is alright to speculate, but Rosenthal states his case as events that will definitely take place, unless his own course of action is followed. He overlooks basic premises in making these statements. It appears that his biased concern over the State of Israel overshadows the objectivity of his analysis.

x. Summary

The month of November did not have the volume of reporting on Arabs seen in the first months. It was a month for reinforcement of earlier journalism. Syrian president Hafez al-Assad drew a great deal of negative press, the most obvious of which was in comparisons to Saddam Hussein. Words like brutal, murderous, corrupt, bloody, terror, torture, etc. associated with Arab dictators kept the same tone of previous months' reporting. We were told of a quiet Arab uprising, by Saudi women against an oppressive Islamic tradition against driving, and by ordinary Arabs against the methods of government. We also read of a blueprint for peace between Arabs and Jews, realizing that the great majority of people on both sides wish for peace.

## CHAPTER VII: DECEMBER 1 - JANUARY 15

The December editions of the Times, like their November counterparts, contain less Arab-specific material than did the editions of the first months. There is one specific article that is perhaps the most significant encountered so far. It hammers home the point of this thesis, and offers a rebuke to the popular thoughts and notions about the Arab world. As the UN deadline for withdrawal approaches, the January editions are largely focused upon the outbreak and subsequent results of a war in the Persian Gulf.

### i. The Way it Was

In the December 4th edition of the Times, Thomas Ewald, an American working in Kuwait and captured by the Iraqis, recounts his experiences as a hostage. This article, entitled 'An Iraqi Hostage on the Way it Was', is of the utmost importance to this thesis, and as such, will be duly analyzed.

Ewald's article starts by saying that "from my own personal experience of the Gulf crisis, I am aware of how misunderstandings flourish when information is incomplete" (NYT, Dec. 4, 1990: Op-Ed pages). Recall everything that has been discussed so far about incomplete or distorted information and the negative consequences (stereotypes) that almost certainly result. Ewald was captured while delivering a message to other Westerners, and was taken to a luxury

hotel. From there, he was moved to a military site where:

The other hostages and I were well treated; indeed we ate better than our captors. I was startled one night to find them devouring our leftovers in the kitchen. I never had the feeling that the Iraqis hated me. Rather, I felt most were simply carrying out orders they wished had not been issued (NYT, Dec. 4, 1990: Op-Ed pages).

Ewald tells of teaching an Iraqi Secret Police captain to play squash, when the captain, confident that he would not be heard, whispered "Saddam Hussein - he is madman" (NYT, Dec. 4, 1990). There is no mention of the popular 'barbaric Iraqi' stereotype in this article, one that arose out of Gulf crisis reporting, according to Jones (1991). In keeping with Arab traditions of hospitality, the hostages were treated well. In other hostage situations, how many hostages have reported that they ate better than their captors? Virtually all of the other accounts, (except one), from hostages describe good treatment and good food at the hands of the Iraqis. After reading stories such as these, stereotypes are challenged, and more importantly, refuted. Remember the media's depiction of the awesome threat posed by Iraq's 'battle hardened' army, with its elite Republican Guard, ready to fight tooth and nail in the desert, and proud to die for the cause? In effect, they were portrayed as 'superhuman soldiers'. According to Ewald, who has experienced this firsthand, this is far from the truth. He states that "while many in the West have taken to linking the words 'battle hardened' and the Iraqi army, a better description is battle weary" (NYT, Dec. 4, 1990: Op-Ed



pages). Ewald reports that nearly all of his captors believed that they would be killed in a war with the U.S., and that in the past they had no desire to fight in wars, much less a new one against a much more advanced opponent. Thus, these so-called fierce, fearless soldiers are shown to be like any other soldiers. They did not want a war any more than did their American counterparts. They realized the situation they were in. The fact that many of them were trying to desert, or that they surrendered at the first possible opportunity, shows that these Arab soldiers actually were human beings who valued their lives, and not the battle hardened, fearless fanatics that the media made them out to be.

Ewald says that Kuwait is often depicted as medieval and autocratic, and thus not entitled to our help. This description, according to Ewald "does the Kuwaitis a severe injustice" (NYT, Dec. 4, 1990: Op-Ed pages). He describes Kuwait as being a nation whose citizens lived in peace before the invasion, and detailed the courageous Kuwaiti resistance, which "was by the most optimistic appraisal, suicidal" (NYT, Dec. 4, 1990: Op-Ed pages). Recall here Jones' (1991) discussion of the Gulf reporting that gives rise to the idea that Saudis and Kuwaitis are ostentatiously wealthy and too lazy or cowardly to fight their own battles (see Early Reporting chapter, section ii.). Cowardly is not the way to describe the Kuwaitis and other Arabs who helped Ewald hide from the Iraqi patrols. The penalty for assisting and/or

hiding Westerners was execution of those responsible. Ewald reports that "realizing the dangers, the Kuwaitis and other Arabs were willing to risk their lives and the lives of their families to protect me" (NYT, Dec. 4, 1990: Op-Ed pages). And, in yet another crisis situation, the Arabs kept with the tradition of hospitality. Ewald says that "they (the Kuwaitis) were kind and generous. Even though food was in short supply with long lines outside the stores, one proprietor invited me in the back door and urged me to take whatever I wanted, for free" (NYT, Dec. 4, 1990: Op-Ed pages).

In summary, this article mirrors this thesis. It is the contention of both that incomplete information leads to misunderstanding, and that this misunderstanding works against efforts to overcome prejudice and racism. Also, as we can see from this article, commonly held beliefs (stereotypes) are easily challenged when counterbalances appear, in this case when Arabs are shown to be humane people, instead of terrorists and barbarians.

## ii. More Terrorism

The December 9th edition of the Times featured an article by Edgar Bronfman, the chairman and CEO of the Seagram Distilleries Corporation and president of the World Jewish Congress. He and members of his family are among the most powerful businessmen in the world; they are billionaires several times over. Bronfman's article is entitled 'A Mideast

Peace Parley is Inevitable'. The article is a call for peace in the region. He examines Israel's role in the history of the region and states that with regard to peace "Israel has always behaved as if time was on its side - that just as things looked bleakest, the Arab world would create a problem or diversion to prevent progress toward a settlement. The Arabs have obliged, mostly with terrorism" (NYT, Dec. 9, 1990: Op-Ed pages). This time the reference is not to Palestinians and terrorism, but Arabs and terrorism. And, according to Bronfman, when things look bleakest, the Arab world would likely cause a problem and impede progress. As with A.M. Rosenthal's 'On My Mind' columns, there is no mention of Israel when problems are discussed. Blame is laid squarely at the feet of the Arabs. Bronfman's reference to terrorism is not specific; he uses the term 'Arab world' and 'Arabs'. Which Arabs does he mean? Is he suggesting that the Arab world is essentially terrorist? This article presents a problem not only because of the unspecific way in which it is written, but because of who actually wrote it. The Bronfman family's wealth places them in the top ten families in North America. They control many corporations and businesses, and are thus highly respected. It is difficult to imagine a family who is more influential. The fact that Edgar Bronfman has written such an article instantly makes it more believable. A man like Edgar Bronfman is larger than life; people simply cannot envision what it is like to be in his

shoes. His word must be viewed as law, being unimaginably wealthy and the president of the World Jewish Congress. Therefore, this article's general association of Arabs and terrorism, as well as the Arab world sabotaging peace, may only serve to reinforce previous stereotypes of Arabs as terrorists, or Arabs as being hungry for war, and incapable of peace. In a more extreme case, consider an article by Gil Alroy, entitled 'Do the Arabs Really Want Peace', that appeared in the February, 1974 issue of Commentary. The article suggests that "Arabs are psychologically incapable of peace and congenitally tied to a concept of justice that means the opposite of justice. Because they possess these characteristics, Arabs are not to be trusted and must be fought interminably as one fights any other fatal disease" (Said, 1974: 85). The naked racism of such 'academic' writing is immediately apparent.

Bronfman's article is a far cry from the racist viewpoint of Alroy. However, as mentioned above, it is a broad generalization that ignores the fact that most Arabs are not terrorists, and that they, like most Jews, want simply to live in peace and harmony. It is exactly these kind of sweeping generalizations that give rise to stereotypes.

### iii. More from Rosenthal

In his December 11th "On My Mind" column, A.M. Rosenthal praises the tough stand taken by President George Bush as the

sole factor responsible for Iraq's release of foreign hostages. While doing this, he also fires more criticisms at the Arab world. Using his own opinions of the Gulf crisis, he states that "somehow the objectives of stopping one more Arab against Arab foray or restoring the oil princelings to the full use of their bank accounts did not fire American imagination or psyche" (NYT, Dec. 11, 1990: Op-Ed pages). Note how Rosenthal prefers to use the term 'princeling' instead of 'prince'. There is an obvious bias in this term, because the word 'prince' would suffice (not to mention being the proper title). It gives the impression that the persons in question are immature, helpless, perhaps even unworthy. It is an effective term for Rosenthal, however, one that he has used before in his columns. It seems as though he has resorted to name-calling as a vehicle for expressing his viewpoint. Once again, there is a reference to Arab bank accounts. If restoring the princelings to full use of their bank accounts did not fire American imagination or psyche, it is little wonder. How many times was that particular objective advanced to the public as one of the goals of U.S. intervention? Rosenthal is worried that Hussein will walk away unblemished:

After kidnapping thousands of foreigners, costing the world hundreds of billions, virtually wiping out Kuwait as a national entity, Saddam Hussein will have paid no price, zero. Then, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and the other oil states will pour billions into Iraq. The U.S. will make a big noise about keeping a coalition presence in the area. But never again will the Arab nations muster to oppose

Hussein. He will not need to send his tanks to control the oil supply of the gulf and thus the world. He can do it by telephone (NYT, Dec. 11, 1990: Op-Ed pages).

If the Arab states joined together to oppose Hussein during the Gulf crisis, why does Rosenthal believe that they would not do so in the future? And why, after the invasion of Kuwait, would the oil states pour billions into Iraq? Rosenthal's writing fits nicely into the categories established by Jones (1991), because it portrays some Arabs as being both fabulously wealthy and very cowardly. It is difficult to imagine Saddam Hussein (especially now) controlling the region's (read 'world', according to Rosenthal) oil supply by telephone. It is even more difficult to envision the other Arab countries, not to mention the Western world, allowing him to do that. Rosenthal's grandiose ideas are more apparent than ever. Obviously, he feels very comfortable talking about unspecified billions of oil dollars, Hussein's inevitable control over the world's oil supply, and the certainty that Arab nations will not stand up to Hussein in the future, should the current crisis pass. These are matters of considerable importance that should not be dealt with in such an imprecise, haphazard, but most of all, trivial fashion, but this is the rule rather than the exception for A.M. Rosenthal.

#### iv. Egypt's Position

Perhaps the most vocal Arab leader during the gulf

crisis, Egyptian president Hosni Mubarak played an important role in arraying Arab nations against Iraq. Western leaders, most notably U.S. president George Bush praised Mubarak for his help. In the December 20th edition of the Times, Ann Lewis' article "Squelch Iraq's Nuclear Ambition" mentions Mubarak's position in the Arab world.

Lewis writes that "Hussein may undercut moderate Arab leaders, particularly Hosni Mubarak, who have staked their futures on the principle that aggression will not be rewarded" (NYT, Dec. 20, 1990: Op-Ed pages). The term 'moderate' is certainly a more favourable description than those that have been attached to other Arab leaders (i.e. Hussein, Assad, Qadaffi), but according to Shaheen (1988) it does not go far enough. He states that "political figures should speak out against the cardboard caricatures. They should refer to Arabs as friends, not just as moderates" (Shaheen, 1988: 10). Mubarak was indeed an ally, even a friend to the Western members of the coalition. While the term 'moderate' is not an unfavourable one, it does not accurately depict the scope of Mubarak's role in the gulf crisis. His condemnation of Iraq's aggression was considerably stronger than moderate, and should be reported as such.

#### v. Hussein's Good Side?

The negative press afforded to Saddam Hussein is expected. The particularly ruthless and brutal nature of his

dictatorship, the invasion of Kuwait, and the need to create a 'villain of the hour' are the reasons for this. However, as mentioned above, there are certain elements of his leadership that have forced the Iraqi people, as well as other world leaders, to look the other way and downplay his record of terror. In her January 6th article entitled "Hussein's Handy Home Survival Guide", Elaine Sciolino addresses these other concerns:

Under Mr. Hussein, Iraq has always succeeded in ruthlessly suppressing even the slightest hint of unrest. But the regime does not rule by terror alone. It survives because it has been supple enough to respond to the basic physical needs of the people. The philosophy of governing is best described in two key words: tarib, or terror and targhib, or enticement (NYT, Jan. 6, 1991: Op-Ed pages).

She quotes an official at the U.S. State Department, who says that "Saddam Hussein is very pragmatic, very realistic and in the present circumstances, his priority is that people enjoy a minimum standard of living" (NYT, Jan. 6, 1991: Op-Ed pages). Although the comparison between Hussein and Adolf Hitler is often overdrawn in other areas, this is an area in which the comparison is justified. While committing many atrocities in pursuit of their goals, these two dictators did manage to provide for their people. Before the war, Iraqis enjoyed a high standard of living relative to those in the poorer developing nations, some of which are Arab countries. Iraq was a modern, industrialized country whose citizens enjoyed the benefits that are only realized by living in such



a country. Saddam Hussein provided these benefits. There were superhighways, hospitals, schools etc. Although his terrible misdeeds can never be justified or excused, it is easy to understand why the people of Iraq praise their leader. They have had fewer material hardships to bear than many of their counterparts in other Third World nations, although life in Iraq is certainly not without problems. One may ask if there are really any advantages to living in a society controlled by fear.

#### vi. A Tragic Convergence

Edward Said's work (1974) on Orientalism is discussed in the Literature Review section at the beginning of this thesis. Realizing the problems that may arise from incomplete information, Said contributed an essay entitled "A Tragic Convergence" to the January 11th issue of the New York Times. Said, an Arab-American professor, gives his view of the events that have placed the world four days from war. In keeping with his earlier work on Orientalism, Said shows displeasure with the image of Arabs presented in the West, and also shows displeasure with some aspects of Arab society.

In an effort to clarify the 'ordinary' Arab position on the Gulf crisis, Said offers the following:

Many Arabs oppose Iraq's aggression and support a total withdrawal of Iraqi troops, yet strongly oppose a U.S. attack. The Gulf is not merely an empty desert with a large pool of 'our' oil underneath and a whole bunch of sheiks, terrorists or Hitlers on top. It is a place with actual

peoples, traditions and societies where aspirations and values have to be viewed as having merit independent of our needs and attitudes (NYT, Jan. 11, 1991: Op-Ed pages).

In saying this, Said challenges the popular misconceptions (stereotypes) of the Arab world that are held by many Westerners. Arabs are not all sheiks or terrorists, nor are they all like the despised Saddam Hussein. Indeed they are actual peoples with independent cultures and traditions. Said cautions against Western ethnocentrism in passing judgement of other peoples in other societies. Said also notes that these misconceptions are an important tool for warfare:

It is terrifying to watch Iraq now being readied for destruction. First, its leader is transformed into the personification of evil, and our new allies the embodiment of virtue. Then Iraq's people and society are reduced to military assets in a demonized Islamic jihad. In all this, Western ignorance of Arab and Islamic culture becomes a useful mode of warfare. The enemy is easily demonized and readied for the final blow (NYT, Jan. 11, 1991: Op-Ed pages).

Note the use of the term 'Western ignorance'. As discussed on several earlier occasions, the majority of persons in the West know very little of Arab and/or Islamic culture. Recall the previous emphasis on the 'collective misreading' of the situation in the Middle East. This is true not only of ordinary civilians, but of more knowledgeable (supposedly) people as well, as the preceding discussion of Bush administration officials demonstrated (October 17-30, sec. iii). Throughout history, as well as during the Gulf crisis Arabs have been reduced to mere caricatures. In times of

crisis, it is much easier to manipulate a caricature than a human being. Thus, the 'demonization' which Said speaks of is a fairly simple task. By drawing on years of inaccurate media portrayals, the U.S. government and media structures were able to effectively dupe the American public into thinking that Arabs, because they are unlike Westerners, are somehow more expendable than other people. Perhaps people associated the characteristics of Saddam Hussein with Arabs in general, although Said states that "for his part, however, and despite his tedious protests, Saddam is scarcely a representative of the Arabs" (NYA, Jan. 11, 1991: Op-Ed pages). The overwhelming majority of persons in the world supported a total withdrawal of Iraqi troops, but were similarly opposed to a war. According to Said's article, this was exactly what most of the Arabs wanted as well. Arabs, like any other people, are not, by nature, war-like, bloodthirsty or anxious for conflict. Yet many media accounts have portrayed them exactly in this fashion. The problem of incomplete reporting does not begin and end in the Western world, however.

Said's article continues with a discussion of mitigating factors in the Arab world that complicate the situation further. One of these factors, cited earlier by others as well, is the sorry state of the Arab media. Said writes "today's Arab media are a disgrace. It is difficult to speak the plain truth in the Arab world" (NYT, Jan. 11, 1991: Op-Ed pages). This is the result when terror runs a country's

institutions. Any sort of dissent is not well received in Arab countries, and usually results in some type of punishment, ranging from imprisonment to death. Said notes that "bureaucracies and secret police rule more or less unchallenged; although they are universally hated and feared" (NYT, Jan. 11, 1991: Op-Ed pages). Many Westerners may have wondered about the intelligence of the civilian Arabs being interviewed on television proclaiming that 'Saddam is great' and 'Death to Bush and America'. They really did not have much choice; speaking out against the government or showing support for a U.S. presence in the Middle East is inviting trouble.

Said's article is entitled "A Tragic Convergence". This refers to the convergence of different ideals that will result in a terribly devastating war. He states that the first tragic convergence is "between imperial America willing to war against an upstart Third World state and an almost equally remorseless Arab propensity to violence and extremism" (NYT, Jan. 11, 1991: Op-Ed pages). It is these acts of violence and extremism, usually in the form of terrorism and Muslim fundamentalism, that have helped form the unfavourable image of Arabs in the Western mindset. The Middle East has a long history of violence, and we often see the fatal consequences of the violent acts committed by the small minority of Arab extremists. The second tragic convergence, or irony, as Said calls it, is that "this is beginning to look like a conflict

between Islam and the West, those two always convenient rubrics" (NYT, Jan. 11, 1991: Op-Ed pages). Again, the religious tenets of Islam are seen to be in conflict with Christianity, even though this is far from the truth. It has already been demonstrated that Islam is a 'normal' religion, which emphasizes worship and service to God. In the Western view of this conflict, Islam, and by unconscious association the Arabs, can only lose.

vii. Summary

The Times reporting for December and early January was instrumental to the contentions of this thesis. The accounts of an American hostage showed the Iraqis to be 'nice captors', if such a term can be used, and the Kuwaitis and other Arabs to be brave souls who risked their lives to protect him. The notion of Western ignorance of Arab and Islamic culture was also advanced, a point that has been made on several occasions throughout this paper. Another article showed how this ignorance was drawn upon in order to dehumanize a people and thus make a war more acceptable. This would have been much more difficult to accomplish, had it not been for the years of inaccurate media portrayals of the Arabs which were simply rehashed during this particular conflict.

## CHAPTER VII: DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The task moves now from reporting what was printed in the Times to interpreting what all of this means. The aims of this paper are twofold. First: to recognize and identify the types and nature of the stereotypes associated with the Arabs. Second: to determine if the U.S. print media (The New York Times in this case) has become more balanced, that is, less stereotypical in its coverage of events involving Arabs. Based on the literature review, as well as our own experiences with Arab affairs in the media, it is obvious that Arabs have been the victims of inaccurate stereotypes in the past. Suleiman (1974) noted a move toward greater balance in Western newsmagazines, and Shaheen (1988) asserts that print and broadcast journalists are starting to challenge the stereotypes. The question is whether or not The New York Times editorials and feature articles continue in this direction.

First, it is necessary to examine other reports on the Gulf crisis and the portrayals of Arabs. Jones (1991) maintains that the Gulf crisis "has only served to underscore the bias already rooted in the collective psyche of North Americans - that Arabs are innately bad". As far as specific Arab stereotypes go, Jones states that the Gulf crisis has shown "that Kuwaitis and Saudis are ostentatiously wealthy and too lazy or cowardly to fight their own battles; Iraqis are

psychopaths who torture and maim; Palestinians are desperate fanatics who espouse terrorism" (Jones, 1991). Aside from these stereotypes, the problem of understanding spreads to Islam, with a similar tendency for Westerners to group all things Arab into one hostile category. This situation is addressed by Earle Waugh in his essay "Aftermath: The West and Islam". He says that "the problem of stereotyping Muslim countries is another issue that seems to be firmly entrenched" (Waugh, 1991: 102). Note the similarities between Jones' use of the phrase "rooted in the collective North American psyche" and Waugh's "firmly entrenched". Both realize that the misconceptions are age-old and deep-seated. Abu-Laban and Abu-Laban comment that "stereotypes about Arabs and Muslims, exaggerated, rigidly held, often unchanging even in the face of contradictory evidence, have deep historical roots in North America and in the West more generally" (Abu-Laban and Abu-Laban, 1991: 131). Abu-Laban and Abu-Laban also note the impact of the crisis from a Canadian viewpoint. Their article documents the harassment of Arab Canadians not only by other Canadians, but by the government as well:

Because Canada eventually positioned its forces alongside the U.S.-led coalition, for the first time, Canadian combat troops were sent to fight against an Arab, primarily Muslim country. At the same time, 'Muslim' and 'Arab' were repeatedly used as descriptors for 'the enemy'. As the Gulf hostilities escalated into the Gulf war, there sometimes appeared to be a blurring of distinctions between 'the enemy' and some Canadians - those of Arab and Muslim heritage (Abu-Laban and Abu-Laban, 1991: 137).

This parallels the idea put forth by Suleiman (1988), that when the States (in this case Canada) are at odds with any Middle Eastern country, the resultant antagonism and negative stereotyping are quickly transferred to Arabs in general.

As has been suggested in the foregoing references to Islam "essential orientations within Islamic tradition are under-represented, misrepresented or ignored" (Waugh, 1991: 108). Waugh suggests that the West's image of Islam's bellicose nature has been formed from historical circumstance, but the Koran itself shows great sophistication in treating peace. Giving examples of the essential Islamic orientations, Waugh notes that the concept of peace has been under-represented, jihad (a term encompassing many Islamic ideals) has been misrepresented through the singular 'holy war' interpretation, and Islamic values of strong family and a rich cultural heritage have been ignored. Waugh's essay is in agreement with earlier work done by Suleiman (1988), Shaheen (1984), and Said (1974, 1978, 1991). According to Said Islam is seen to be "a fraudulent new version of some previous experience, in this case Christianity" (Said, 1978: 59). Islam has been feared in the West for centuries, and continues to be misunderstood by Westerners (Waugh, 1991), (Said, 1978), (Abu-Laban and Abu-Laban, 1991). Or, as Said has written "the way of perceiving Islam is based on Western self-image, and not on objective truth" (Said, 1978, as quoted in Waugh, 1991: 102).



The Public Broadcasting System (PBS) show "The Arab World", hosted by Bill Moyers, aired in the spring of 1991. In one particular episode, Dr. Michael Suleiman and Dr. Yvonne Haddad discussed modern day perceptions of the Arabs. Haddad described how Arab stereotypes have actually changed over the past three decades. For example, in the 60's the predominant stereotype was 'camel jockey'; in the 70's it was 'oil sheik'; in the 80's it was 'terrorist'. It will be a few more years before we can identify some or all of the definite Arab stereotypes in the 1990's, although it is hard to imagine a worse start for this decade (the Gulf War). However, the analysis of the New York Times does provide some good insight into the direction that reporting on Arab affairs may take in the future. It is especially useful (and necessary) to contrast what we have learned from the literature review and recent scholarship on the Gulf crisis with what was discovered in the Times, in order to "get a feel" for the reporting in The New York Times.

#### i. The New Face of Islam

The key concept behind objective reporting is balance. With balanced reporting it is possible to weigh the pros and cons of particular events, and thus arrive at conclusions based on this expanded information. Critics of the media often cite a lack of balance as the major problem plaguing our news sources. Stereotypes arise largely out of a lack of

balance in the media, although there are other factors that influence their development. There is no question that balance has traditionally been lacking in the reporting of Arab affairs, and that this deficiency has led to all sorts of biased, inaccurate and stereotypical images of the Arab. In the past, one of the most deficient areas of media coverage, i.e. one that lacks balance, is that of Islam. However, The New York Times makes tremendous strides in moving away from the one-sided journalistic practices that had previously shown Islam as a violent, fanatical cult-type religion that is anathema to all Western values, and left Westerners with the impression that Islam is a threat not only to their religious traditions, but to Western society as well.

There are several references to Islam in the Times that fly in the face of popular Western misconceptions. The Iraqi invasion of Kuwait and the internment of foreigners were described on numerous occasions as an offense against all Arab and Islamic laws. It was also mentioned that the Islamic tradition of hospitality had been violated. Later articles dealt with the concept of Islamic jihad and explained it in a fashion that went far beyond the literal English translation of holy war. It was shown to be a concept that embraced many peaceful ideals. Of considerable importance was the Oct. 7 edition of the Times in which it was said that the Muslim jihad is not unlike America's Manifest Destiny, or the belief that God is on our side. Unfortunately, television reports

made no such connection. Islam was also compared to other rich religious traditions. The net result? The New York Times' editorials and feature articles cut through the myths surrounding Islam and its followers. It was shown to be a religion steeped in the tradition of hospitality and faith, and that it emphasizes a peaceful existence while serving God. Far from the deep Western stereotypes of Islam as fanatical, warlike, monolithic and anti-Western, the Times showed that Islam is really quite like any other religion, in that it focuses on worship and peace. From the symbolic interactionist perspective, this type of reporting has positive implications. Since Islam was depicted in a positive fashion, it is logical to assume that the readers of the articles will be left with a positive impression of it, where a negative one may have existed before. People react to things based on the meaning that these things have for them. It can be said that Islam was given a positive meaning, and thus, at best, this positive meaning will be adopted by the perceiver, resulting in a favourable reaction to Islam in future situations. At the least, there is a positive starting point in the portrayals of Islam, and this may force people to re-consider their previous thoughts. It is difficult to alter long-held beliefs and attitudes, even in the face of contradicting evidence (Rosenthal, 1978). However, the Times has certainly given the reader a good base upon which to affect a change in his\her beliefs.

On the other hand, some references to Muslim countries were not as favourable. An example would be the limited rights of women in some Muslim countries, such as the driving ban in Saudi Arabia. The status of women in Muslim countries is poor when judged by Western standards, but not as poor as many believe, according to Shaheen (1990). In the quest for balance, it is important that the Times included articles on the less favourable aspects of Muslim society as well. The extreme actions of Muslim fundamentalists can also be included here.

Alas, we must realize that The New York Times is not the media source of choice for most Westerners, even though it is arguably the world's most influential daily publication. It is much easier, and evidently more preferable to watch television (80% of Americans rely solely on television for their news (Shaheen, 1984)). In contrast to the explanations of Islam, and the accompanying association of positive descriptions in the Times, Waugh offers the following:

What are many of the deeper significances of the Gulf War? Here it is obvious how great the status quo turns out to be. When we know the ultimate extent of this clash, it will not likely just be in terms of dollars to rebuild flattened apartments and industries. It will be in the seeds of hatreds and animosities, of widening of the chasms between peoples, of cultural and religious lacunae that failed to be filled with understanding and assistance. We had one great window on the region that could have become the impetus for the building of bridges of peace and mutual support. That it was no more than a passing moment, and then was filled with the deadly visions of a computer war, speaks more eloquently of our mind-set than many dissertations. In several key areas of

comprehension, as we have indicated above, Islamic values, Islamic contributions and Islamic strengths were overrun by long-standing religious antagonisms. Unfortunately, understanding Islam, or genuinely appreciating it in the West, it seems, is not much further along than before this great tragedy (Waugh, 1991: 117).

Further, Waugh offers that:

Once more we encountered a public whose perceptions of Islam appeared hobbled by cliches and antiquated conceptions, and by leaders who were content to use stereotypes to justify actions. After a while, one became jaded: It was as if none of the analysis, speeches, educated opinions, etc. made any difference; hours of T.V. and radio interviews disappeared into some collective black hole" (Waugh, 1991: 92).

This means that all the efforts to improve understanding were simply glossed over or disregarded by the public at large. Interestingly, there was a time, according to Waugh, when it appeared that public perception was undergoing a change:

At the same time, the widespread interest in the various dimensions of the conflict indicated a lifting to consciousness, and even a will to understand that had never been experienced before. Whether by design or by necessity, the airways had to be filled with reportage, and given the controlled nature of much of the battlefield material, 'experts' of all kinds, including some articulate Arabs and Muslims found a medium. For a little time, it appeared that there were positive repercussions from the Gulf war, that perhaps public response to Islam was just not the way it was before this tragic event (Waugh, 1991: 92).

While this is certainly encouraging, largely because the potential for a definite change seems to have existed, it is the final result that we must address. Unfortunately, things do not appear to be much different, even after a period when it appeared as though age-old stereotypes would be seriously

challenged. Waugh points to three major events during the course of the Gulf crisis that effectively demonstrate the magnitude of the problem:

The size of the problem can be measured by three news items. In Canada Muslims were questioned by security forces with no apparent justification other than that they had an Arabic name. In Tennessee, merely having an Arabic name was enough for one Muslim to receive 945 threatening phone calls in a 24 hour period during the height of the conflict. In Washington, the American Vice-President lumped Islamic fundamentalism with Hitler's demonic campaigns and communism's oppression as the three horrors of our century (Waugh, 1991: 92).

Thus, while the Times published articles that encouraged and fostered understanding of Islam, and television and other media gave Arabs and Muslims a 'medium' to attempt to improve understanding, it appears that this potential was crushed beneath the rolling weight of popular consensus.

#### ii. The Human Face of the Arabs

Virtually all the writers reviewed in this study note that the Arabs are not shown as ordinary humans in the media. Shaheen complains that rarely, if ever, have we seen Arabs singing lullabies, driving taxis, or healing the sick. Jones (1991) says that Arabs are simply not seen in human terms, that they are two dimensional figures, a hodgepodge of misremembered stories from The Arabian Nights. On several occasions, the Times ran articles that challenged the existing stereotypes. The accounts of hostages in Iraq were particularly interesting. Four of the five stories told of

Iraqi hospitality, involving good food and accommodations. An American told of teaching an Iraqi secret police captain to play squash. Another told of fresh lamb being served to the hostages. Yet another told of Kuwaiti and other Arab efforts to hide him from the Iraqis, knowing full well that the penalty for their actions was death. This same hostage was also invited to enter through the back door of a grocery store, circumventing the large lines at the front, and take whatever he wanted for free. The lone exception to this was the story of a British hostage in which it was said that both food and living conditions were poor, and that the guards were 'sadistic'. However, even this story referred to good treatment in captivity, after the hostage was transferred from his original location. Words like polite, nice, friendly, even apologetic regularly appeared in the hostages' tales as descriptions of their Iraqi captors. Recall here Jones' (1991) suggestion that Iraqis are thought to be psychopaths who torture and maim. There were incidents where the word 'barbaric' was associated with Iraqis, along with descriptions of unspeakably cruel behaviour on their part. This was advanced as an excellent cause to go to war. A year after the war, things are not as cut-and-dried as they appeared to be. CBC's The Fifth Estate ran a program one year after the Gulf war, in January 1992. During the Gulf war, there were reports that Iraqi troops had stormed through hospital maternity wards throwing babies out of incubators. Indeed, there were many

similar stories of atrocities being committed by the Iraqis. The Fifth Estate showed that the account of the troops removing babies from incubators was totally fabricated, it was strictly propaganda. This raises questions about other incidents of Iraqi 'barbarism'. The need to create a villain of the hour during times of war is obvious here. It is necessary to arouse national sentiments in order to gain support for a war. The best way to do this is to make the enemy appear as a genuine threat or as a doer of terrible deeds; killing babies certainly has to be one of the worst. Therefore, if the enemy does things like this, it is definitely O.K., perhaps even necessary, to kill them. U.S. Secretary of State James Baker cited reports describing how Iraqi troops shot the children of a Kuwaiti couple, used animals for target practice, and how one of these animals, a lion, mauled a young girl. While it is difficult to verify these accounts, The Fifth Estate raises some questions. There is no question, however, that the media images of Iraqis were almost invariably negative, a practice that dehumanized the enemy, transforming them into simple military assets.

There was also a story about an Egyptian man's happiness when he learned that his two sons had escaped from Kuwait. Ironically, this man is a taxi driver, a specific occupation that Shaheen (1988) says that Arabs are rarely seen doing. He is an ordinary man with an ordinary job. He has ordinary feelings of love for his family, reflected in the ordinary



tears of joy he shed when he heard the good news about his sons. In short, he is a human being, exhibiting none of the familiar characteristics that the media usually ascribe to the Arabs.

It can be said that the New York Times' range of editorial opinion and views expressed in feature articles was of a much greater scope than was expressed on television. The U.S. government, which exercised full censorship control over the media, effectively narrowed the perspective of television. A year after the Gulf war, however, two documentaries have aired on television that suggest that television may be finally revealing more realistic images of the Arabs, giving them a human face.

The first documentary entitled "Iraq: One Year Later" appeared on CNN in January of 1992. The program showed the terrible aftermath of a so-called "surgical war". It showed small children playing in pools of sewage that cannot be cleaned up until treatment plants are re-built and electricity is restored. It emphasized the staggering numbers of children who will die in the future because of poor sanitary conditions. It displayed the central market of an Iraqi village, destroyed when a coalition bomb veered 700 metres off target and landed there. A young boy lost both his legs; dozens more were wounded and/or killed. The U.N. embargo has left the country short of vital medicines and hospital supplies. Conditions that once required simple medical

procedures are now life-threatening. The shortage of goods has sent prices skyrocketing, and the people simply cannot afford basic necessities. In summary, this program displays human tragedy to a degree that is rarely seen, and cannot even be imagined by Westerners. What is truly remarkable about this is that the Arabs are shown to be the victims of violence. Shaheen (1990) notes that Palestinians are never shown as victims of violence, or as normal human beings. This documentary is wholly focused on the victims of violence. We see Arabs mourning the loss of family and friends after a U.S. intelligence error led to the destruction of a civilian bomb shelter, killing approximately 500 people. We see the despondent faces, the ruined lives, the lack of hope for the future. The magnitude of the suffering is absolutely astounding. During the Gulf war, it was almost unthinkable that we would ever see a program like this, a program that displayed the war's toll on Iraqi civilians. A powerful and moving documentary, "Iraq: One Year Later" is a tale of absolute devastation. It is also a major step forward for the televised media with regard to the Arabs. By showing that Arabs can indeed be victims instead of only proponents of violence, the door is opened for more accurate and humane media images of Arabs in the future.

The second film is entitled "Deadly Currents" and deals with the Arab-Israeli conflict. Filmed entirely in Israel and the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip, this film, which is not

narrated, displays the balance that is so often missing from the reporting of this conflict. The film goes against the norm of the "movies which touch on the Arab-Israeli conflict tend to present a negative (bad guy) image of the Arabs, and a positive (good guy) image of the Israelis" (Abu-Laban and Abu-Laban, 1991). We are presented with the views of both Arabs and Israelis, without narrative comment. It shows Palestinian youths throwing stones at Israeli soldiers, as well as Israeli soldiers searching Palestinian homes. It documents the acts of violence committed by the two groups as well. Many Jews envision a lasting peace in the region; many Arabs wish for the same. Other Jews believe in an Israel that is free of Arabs; some Arabs believe that the land that was once Palestine must not be occupied by Jews. The bottom line is that it is a touchy situation involving religion, land rights and historical conflict. The important thing about "Deadly Currents" is that it provides the viewer with an objective account of both the Arab and Israeli side of the conflict, a journalistic achievement that can act as a springboard for further objectivity in the future.

### iii. The Real Culprit - Saddam Hussein

If there was any doubt as to the villainous nature of Saddam Hussein before the Gulf crisis, it was certainly erased by media accounts during it. The media was literally filled with negative descriptions, commentary and analysis of the

"Butcher of Baghdad." Indeed, it was Hussein who drew the absolute majority of negative press during the crisis. Saddam was definitely "the enemy", and it was made clear that this enemy was also a "Muslim" and an "Arab" (Abu-Laban and Abu-Laban, 1991). The New York Times' editorials and feature articles maintained a harsh tone against Hussein, regularly using words such as brutal, menacing, forceful, murderous, ruthless, etc. to describe him. In addition, it was made known on several occasions that he supports international terrorism. During the same period, Syrian president Hafez Assad received the same type of coverage, almost strictly negative, but just not as often. In fact, Hussein and Assad were compared on several occasions with the purpose of showing their similar track records. They were even called "terrorist twins" by A.M. Rosenthal. The natural question, then, is whether the negative characteristics afforded to these leaders were associated with Arabs and Muslims in general. The Times made it clear that the actions of Hussein did not represent the Arabs, even President George Bush noted that these "actions went against the tradition of Arab hospitality, and against the tradition of Islam" (Shaheen, 1990: B3). A Times editorial stated that "Bigotry thrives on slanderous stereotypes, and the crazed Arab is today's version of the Teutonic hordes and the yellow peril ..... To hold a diverse Arab world collectively responsible for a single leader's misdeeds traduces an entire people" (Shaheen, 1990: B3). An

important exception to this pattern is the work of A.M. Rosenthal. His contempt for Hussein and Assad reaches out to the rest of the Arab world, as if it were somehow to blame. Rosenthal's columns made virtually no distinction between these dictators and the rest of Arab society. However, the other material that appeared in the Times was quite consistent in its separation of Hussein from the rest of the Arab world.

Did society at large recognize this separation? Or, were all Arabs lumped together into one category with the name of Hussein? According to post-war scholarship on this subject the separation was not recognized, or if it was, the resultant public attitudes remain unchanged. (Abu-Laban and Abu-Laban, 1991; Waugh, 1991; "The Arab World", April 1-5, 1991). Further, James Abourezk, the National Chairman of the Arab-American Anti-Discrimination Committee adds that "there is a direct correlation between the demonization of Saddam and violent acts against Arab-Americans in this country, and always when something happens in the Middle East, it bubbles up over there, we get hammered here" (The Arab World, April 1, 1991). This is in agreement with Abu-Laban and Abu-Laban's (1991) account of harassment experienced by Canadians of Arab and Muslim background. Consequently, when the United States is in any kind of conflict in the Middle East, the resultant antagonism and negative stereotyping are transferred to Arabs (even ethnic minorities who appear to be Arab (Abu-Laban and Abu-Laban, 1991)) in general (Suleiman, 1988). After

concluding their research, Abu-Laban and Abu-Laban offer the following:

An entrenched, ethnocentric, Western-centred perspective has worked against inter-cultural understanding and often biased interpretations. As a consequence, during international hostilities, this pre-existing, distorted standpoint and its ramifications set the stage for an intensification of hostility, intolerance and harassment toward Canadians of Arab and Muslim heritage (Abu-Laban and Abu-Laban, 1991: 120).

This pattern of harassment of minorities in times of crisis is well documented throughout Western history.

As was established in the first few pages, one of the aims of this thesis was to determine whether or not the fact that many Arab countries were fighting on the side of the Americans influenced media reporting. The New York Times regularly distinguished between Iraq and the Arab coalition members. The Times described the Arab coalition members as allies, and praised leaders like Egypt's Hosni Mubarak for taking a strong stand against a fellow Arab country. According to Shaheen "we fail to take into consideration with Saddam Hussein that there were nine Arab nations with us in the Gulf, more than 200 000 troops that were standing alongside American troops" (The Arab World, April 1, 1991). On the same T.V. program host Bill Moyers suggested to Mr. Abourezk that since many Arab nations were on the side of the U.S.-led coalition, this would rebound in their favour. He responded:

Well, actually (it should rebound in their favour), but people don't distinguish. The average American

doesn't distinguish between the Arab countries who are allied with the United States. But for the most part in this country, most Lebanese and most Palestinians and most other Arabs in this country were opposed to the invasion of Iraq; they were opposed to the invasion of Kuwait as well (The Arab World, April 1, 1991).

This is in agreement with Suleiman (1988), and Abu-Laban and Abu-Laban (1991), in that it recognizes that most people do not distinguish between Arabs from different countries. In regard to the Arab and Muslim members of the coalition, Abu-Laban and Abu-Laban note that:

Even though there was mixed participation of Arab and Muslim forces in the coalition, press coverage tended to emphasize the 'different' as the 'enemy' and the 'enemy' as 'different', an approach facilitated by historical Orientalism as well as contemporary politics (Abu-Laban and Abu-Laban, 1991: 121).

This is not to say that all media reports were presented in the context of Orientalism. As Waugh (1991) stated, there were persons, journalists and otherwise, who made a genuine effort to present a more balanced portrayal of the situation.

Abu-Laban and Abu-Laban draw similar conclusions:

It would be an error to imply that all Canadian media and all reporting were uncritical, insensitive, biased or unfair. There were some notable Canadian efforts to restore balance and provide background information on Palestinians and Arabs, on Muslims and Islam, and on the plight of Arab-Canadians; to understand the history of the Gulf conflict and the question of Palestine; and to critically assess the political and moral judgements on all sides to the conflict. Overall, however, it was an up-hill effort. Canadian newscasters and writers were often isolated from the problems; hence a lot remained to be understood, quickly. They had to do this catching up amid the pressures of deadlines and the overwhelming, countervailing, influence of the

American media; itself constrained by State Department guidelines (Abu-Laban and Abu-Laban, 1991: 128).

#### iv. The Real Results of the Gulf Crisis

The tone of the Gulf crisis scholarship is very consistent. The articles reviewed, both in the Times and elsewhere, suggest that while attempts were made to address the problems of stereotyping and misunderstanding, these attempts failed to affect any real, tangible change in public perception. A good universal description would be "There were several positive signs that attitudes may change, BUT...." The theme is one of lost opportunities. Demonstrating that this is indeed the case, Abu-Laban and Abu-Laban write:

The Orientalist understandings which continue to inform major sectors of Canadian society enhanced the likelihood of problems of bigotry and discrimination and contributed little to inter-cultural understanding....Bigotry and prejudice were not eradicated; no formula seems to have been adopted to ward off a "next time" (Abu-Laban and Abu-Laban, 1991: 139).

Thus, we can see that the phenomenon of Orientalism is at the root of this problem. Orientalism provides obstacles to understanding, and thus facilitates stereotypes, because:

This distorted perspective creates a dichotomy of East vs. West. The relationship is seen as hierarchical. The East is depicted as unchanging, stagnant, alien and inferior to the West and things Western. These negative characterizations stereotyping Arabs, Muslims and Islam arise from an unfortunate legacy of individual comparison between East and West (Dossa, 1987, cited in Abu-Laban and Abu-Laban, 1991: 132).

Indeed, the influence of Orientalist perspectives is so



ingrained in our society, that any remedies for past, present or even future problems must include an assessment of this enduring mythology (Abu-Laban and Abu-Laban, 1991).

v. The Triumph of The New York Times

How, then, does the Times compare with these other news sources? Did the Times reinforce any existing Arab stereotypes, or present any new ones? Was the reporting of Arab affairs more balanced than the other sources, or did it fall into the 'popular press' category of singular themes and ideas? From the feature articles and editorials reviewed in seventy (70) editions of the Times, it is clear that this newspaper exhibited very little volume of the popular misconceptions that other media advance regularly, and that reporting involving Arabs was, on virtually all occasions, balanced and objective.

In saying this, it should be noted that the Times was not free of words that are usually associated with the Arabs. On the contrary, words like terrorist, barbaric, ruthless, bloody, etc. appeared quite regularly. The important aspect in the usage of such words, which represent stereotypical descriptions, is that they were used only to describe Saddam Hussein, Hafez Assad, and specific incidents of violence. The Times was very deliberate and consistent in its separation of the unfriendly aspects of the Arab world from the normal everyday side. There can be little doubt that the editors

realized the scope of the problem facing the country, and were aware of the strength of popular opinion, however wrong it may be. Hence, they were careful to include articles which portrayed Arabs and Islam for what they really are. The amount of favourable press afforded to Islam was quite astonishing, in light of earlier inaccurate, one-sided media portrayals. The popular beliefs about Islam were nowhere to be found. Gone were the images of a mystical, fanatical cult with black-veiled women and war-hungry men willing to die for anything. Gone were the extreme examples of Islam promoted by the late Ayatollah Khomeini. In every instance, Islam was shown to be a 'viable' religion, deep in tradition and rich in meaning. The term "jihad" was explained beyond its literal English translation of holy war, described as a largely peaceful concept, and that 'holy war' is actually an inaccurate literal translation. It was made clear that hospitality and peace were two central concepts of Islam, not war and death as many people believe. The fact that jihad was compared with America's own Manifest Destiny gives some idea of just how far the Times went in its efforts to dispel the rigidly-held stereotypes about Islam.

As mentioned above, descriptions that may be classified as unfavourable often appeared in articles about the Arabs. This is an important part of balance, however. For example, the word "terrorist" was associated not only with the Palestinians but with Saddam Hussein, Hafez Assad and other

Arab regimes. On one occasion, terrorism was said to be the only response that the Arabs had for Israeli peace initiatives. The "Arab as terrorist", usually the Palestinians, has been identified as one of the most common stereotypes (Shaheen, 1984, 1990) and it is a word that we encounter quite frequently in the Times' discussion of Arabs. It was noted that both Hussein and Assad support terrorism. There was never anything that gave the impression that all Arabs are terrorists, however. The dividing line was drawn between the regimes and the people. There were articles that mentioned Palestinian terrorist organizations, such as those under the direction of Abu Nidal and Abul Abbas. Of course, the telling factor of the news is how the public interprets it. Perhaps the simple association of some Palestinians with terrorism was enough to convince people that being Palestinian means being a terrorist, or even that being Arab means being a terrorist. What is important here is that the Times did not encourage the formation of such beliefs. Quite the opposite, the articles showed that the Arabs did many other normal things besides engage in terrorism, and that the Arab world really is more than just an empty desert full of terrorists (Said, 1991). It was expected that acts of terrorism would be committed against coalition countries, especially the U.S., and this was explicitly stated on television. Fortunately, these attacks never materialized. Maybe this fact held some weight in refuting the "Arab as terrorist" stereotype, forcing

people to reconsider their beliefs. Then again, maybe it did not. The key factor lies in interpretation of media coverage. The Times, because it is a newspaper, was able to explain things in much greater depth, and present sides of the story that simply never appeared on television. We must realize that it was possible to keep abreast of the crisis by merely turning on the television, and that television is the overwhelming choice for news among the public. What you have then, is the coverage of the Times, critical, balanced and fair, against the enormous popularity of the narrow perspectives of television. Given the results of the post-war scholarship on the crisis, it is immediately apparent that television won the media war. The number of people who would have read the Times during the crisis is minute in comparison to those who drew their news strictly from television. It was a David vs. Goliath scenario, only this time, the little guy appears to have lost to the giant.

#### vi. The Results

With regard to the statement of the problem for this thesis, we must now address the content of the Times. In providing critical and balanced coverage of the Arab world and Islam, the Times did not create any new Arab stereotypes, nor did it reinforce any existing ones. The most dramatic example of a challenge to stereotypes involved the material on Islam. The Times' references to terrorism, lack of democracy, and

human rights abuses, while unfavourable, do not constitute stereotypical material, but rather, the truth. Besides, these types of descriptions were reserved for the more brutal leaders and regimes, most notably (and predictably) Saddam Hussein. Shaheen (1988) noted that print and broadcast journalists were finally starting to challenge the stereotypes. The Times has certainly continued down this path, and beyond challenging the stereotypes, takes important steps toward a more objective presentation of the Arabs. For broadcast journalists in times of crisis, their freedom severely limited by governments, the task is considerably more difficult, and this fact is apparent in the television broadcasts that aired during the crisis. The television media created a 'villain of the hour' in Saddam Hussein, and it was made clear that this villain was both an Arab and a Muslim (Abu-Laban and Abu-Laban, 1991). It was easy to play upon Orientalist myths to dehumanize a people, and thus gain public support for a war. A telling statistic is that President George Bush enjoyed an approval rating high in the 80 percent range after the war, and now that figure is somewhere in the low 40's. A notable exception to the television norm is CNN's "Iraq: One Year Later", which showed Arabs as victims of the devastating war. Given the nature of television coverage during the Gulf crisis, it was a complete surprise to see a program such as this on American television. The documentary "Deadly Currents" is a major advancement as well. By

presenting the viewer with opinions from both sides of the Arab-Israeli conflict without narrative comment, it served to broaden our understanding of the region and its people. Understanding and education are critical in challenging stereotypes, and "Deadly Currents" does a splendid job in promoting both.

The second aim of this thesis was to determine whether the print media (the Times) had become more balanced in its coverage of Arab affairs, following Suleiman's (1974) contention that Western newsmagazines were becoming more balanced. The answer here is a resounding yes. Again, the commentary on Islam is the most striking example. In addition, the story of the Egyptian taxi driver, hostage accounts and editorial comment combined to give the Arabs a decidedly human face. Arab and Islamic traditions of hospitality were noted, along with the strong Arab sense of family and historical roots. Editorials stated that the invasion violated all Arab and Islamic customs, and that we must be careful not to let the actions of one leader tarnish the image of an entire people. The supposedly brutal Iraqis were shown to be gracious hosts, providing good food and accommodations for the hostages. Said's (1991) article spoke out against popular Orientalist culture which had the effect of dehumanizing the Iraqi people, turning them into military assets ready for destruction. This type of commentary was never seen on television; indeed television was responsible

for the great majority of the dehumanization. It was emphasized that the people of the West, both ordinary citizens and government officials, do not understand the Arab world very well, that we are guilty of a collective misreading of the situation. Shaheen states that "when all imagemakers rightfully begin to treat Arabs and all other minorities with respect and dignity, we may begin to unlearn our prejudices" (Shaheen, 1988: 10). In the face of many years of inaccurate and stereotypical media portrayals of Arabs, The New York Times succeeds in challenging these images, providing an excellent start to the process of unlearning prejudice.

vii. The Fog is Lifting

One year after the Gulf crisis, many investigative books have appeared on the market. Theodore Draper has reviewed fourteen of these books, and summarized them in two articles. It is the conclusion of many of these books that the Gulf war was "the worst reported war in American history" (Draper, 1992: 43). In fact, after the war was over, seventeen of the major news organizations (newspapers and television networks) made a formal protest to U.S. Secretary of Defense Richard Cheney against the "real censorship" during the war which confirmed the "worst fears of reporters in a democracy". The matter has not been heard of since (Draper, 1992). Indeed, Draper's article outlines the "unprecedented control of the press by Army commanders", as well as the "incompetent

reporters" who knew little or nothing about covering a war (Draper, 1992). There is no doubt that the media images of the Gulf war were determined by the government acting through the military. The result was a one-sided view of the war that was at best a far cry from the actual events taking place. Perhaps the best example of this was Saddam's supposed "million-man army", a buzzword used by Secretary Cheney himself in order to enforce the notion that Saddam's threat must be eliminated. One year later, it is reported that this fearsome army actually numbered about 200 000 or less, and that the coalition enjoyed a manpower advantage that may have been as high as 5 to 1 (CNN, Early Prime, April 22, 1992). Before the war began, there were numerous suggestions that the Iraqi army was both uncommitted and inferior. This was the feeling put forth by some Saudi officials, as well as Egyptian president Hosni Mubarak. Air Force Colonel Michael Dugan was fired by Cheney for making remarks to this effect. While the Americans celebrated the "glorious victory", it was never raised that the Iraqi army was hopelessly outclassed and did not fight. Civilian death tolls were never released during the war, nor were pictures of the slaughter of tens of thousands of Iraqi troops. Certainly, public support for this war would have declined if people had seen anything other than laser-guided bombs and missiles destroying targets with astounding precision. It was also never reported during the war that an estimated 70 percent of coalition bombs actually



missed their targets (CNN Newsnight, April 1992). Simply put, there was no human element in the reporting during the war. This is why the Times coverage was so important. While actual reports "from the battlefield" were few in number, the Times published actual accounts from hostages, as well as articles from authors who realized the magnitude of the problem at hand, and wrote articles that attempted to cut through the misconceptions. The result was a relatively objective news source in a sea of bias and half-truths.

## CHAPTER IX: RESULTS WITHIN THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Social learning theory suggests that both cognitive factors and external stimuli are involved in the learning process, as well as an environment that is ever-changing. The concept of external stimuli in an ever-changing environment is of primary interest here. Bandura notes that "people's perceptual sets (cognitive formation), deriving from past experience and situational requirements, affect what features they extract from observations and how they interpret what they see and hear" (Bandura, 1977: 25). It has been shown that past media images of Arabs, especially on television, have been almost wholly negative, and it, therefore, stands to reason that a person's perceptual set for Arabs will be similarly negative. This would be true if the stimulus was consistently negative, and if a negative environment was fixed for the person. But the environment is not fixed, and in the Times, anyway, there are indeed some positive stimuli. The power of models is discussed by Bandura et al. with particular emphasis on televised models. They state that "models presented in televised form are so effective in capturing attention that viewers learn much of what they see, without requiring any special incentives to do so" (Bandura, Grusec and Menlove, 1966). From this we can say that years of negative Arab images on television have led people to learn that Arabs really are like this. It is difficult to imagine that readers of the Times would have formed similar opinions.

According to social learning theory, the positive stimuli in the Times becomes part of a person's perceptual set, thus effecting his/her cognitive formations. That a once negative model is now being portrayed in a positive manner does not go "unnoticed" in a person's cognitive formation. Of course, whether or not it is a powerful enough incentive to change what has already been learned is another matter. However, when similar positive images are encountered frequently enough, the person's perceptual set will be influenced to a greater degree. Social learning theory holds that repetition is important to learning. Thus, a person may develop a positive perceptual set of the Arabs after repeated exposure to positive stimuli in exactly the same fashion a person develops a negative perceptual set after repeated exposure to negative stimuli. Naturally, we must now include a discussion of the importance of these positive and negative symbols to the learning process.

It is here that Blumer's three premises of symbolic interactionism blend with social learning theory. Here is what our results mean in light of these three premises.

- 1) Human beings act toward things on the basis of the meanings that the things have for them.

Based on this premise, we can say that people react to others based on the meaning that these others have for the person. Popular media culture has traditionally attached negative meanings to the Arabs, so it is little wonder why they are perceived in negative terms by the public. The Times,

however, has attached a generally positive image to the Arabs. Given the large circulation numbers of the Times, and its considerable influence, it is possible that people who read the Times during the Gulf crisis will react to the Arabs in a positive fashion. If something or someone has a positive meaning for a person, Blumer's first premise asserts that the person will react favourably to the person or thing in question. Blumer's second premise deals with the meaning of things:

- 2) The meaning of things arises out of the social interaction one has with one's fellows.

This simply states that meaning is a social product; it is created; not inherent in things; it is not a given. In this case, people are not born with the belief that all Arabs are bad, this is learned from other sources. Blumer says that "the meaning of a thing for a person grows out of the ways in which other persons act toward the person with regard to the thing. Their actions operate to define the thing for the person" (as cited in Wallace and Wolf, 1986: 205). Here it is apparent that consensus behaviour gives meaning to things. Given that stereotyping is a form of consensus behaviour, we can see how stereotypes arise out of popular consensus. The Times reporting was not like that of earlier media sources documented by the other authors cited in this study. The other media sources, most notably television, have historically presented Arab images which give rise to consensus beliefs that Arabs are different, 'the enemy' in the

case of the Gulf crisis. The Times, however, would encourage consensus beliefs that Arabs really are not so different, they have feelings like other people; the predominant religion, Islam, is similar in many ways to Christianity or Judaism; that they are not the monsters that the media have made them out to be.

- 3) The meaning of things are handled in and modified through an interpretive process used by the person in dealing with the things he encounters.

The key word here is 'modified'. Blumer says that a person handles meanings through a process of talking to oneself. It is in the process of "making indications to oneself" that someone arrives at an account of the way they are feeling, how they should react to something, etc. (Blumer, cited in Wallace and Wolf, 1986). According to this, past experience plays an important role in current behaviour. The person makes indications to him/herself based on past experiences in order to determine an appropriate reaction to the current situation. In the case of the Arabs, past exposure to the Arab images in the media, as well as society in general, has likely been unfavourable for the person, and thus the person would react unfavourably to the Arabs in a current situation. However, if we consider the fact that these interpretive processes are constantly being modified in the face of new situations, exposure to media such as the Times will add positive images to the person's 'cache' of experience. A person would then make the indication to him/herself taking into account this

new information, and depending on the impact of the positive images, may react favourably to Arabs in a current situation.

Symbolic interactionism, more specifically Blumer's three premises shows us not only the power of past experience in shaping a person's beliefs and attitudes, but the importance of new experience as well. People react to other persons and things based on the meaning that these entities have for them. Consensus gives meaning, as does past and present experience. In the past, it is perfectly understandable that people should have an unfavourable, stereotypical image of Arabs because that was virtually the only meaning that the media attached to them. The media represents consensus, and has tremendous impact in shaping beliefs. According to Bandura "the more peoples' images of reality derive from the media's symbolic environment, the greater is its social impact" (Bandura, 1977:40). Consequently, popular beliefs learned largely through the media perpetuate themselves in the face of unchanging evidence. However, the Times coverage of the Gulf crisis represents a departure from the past documented media images of Arabs, and therefore represents, at least right now, non-consensus meaning, especially compared to television reports during the same period. Eventually, other sources of media may emulate the Times, following its lead, and "retire the stereotypical Arab to a media Valhalla" (Shaheen, 1988: 10). By doing this, people would be presented with a whole new set of meanings related to Arabs, and would thus react

favourably toward them.

### CONCLUSION

The New York Times provided a relatively critical and balanced commentary during the Gulf crisis. The inaccurate, stereotypical media images of Arabs were not only absent but vigorously challenged. It is very encouraging to find this kind of coverage in what is widely regarded as the most influential daily publication in the world, as well as the largest circulation daily in the U.S. This will almost certainly encourage other media sources to follow suit, given the Times' envied position in the upper echelons of journalism. It must also be noted that the Times could not, and did not, realistically compete with television during the Gulf crisis. Because of this fact, most post-war scholarship on the Gulf reveals that little has changed in America's perception of the Arabs. It was acknowledged that there was ample opportunity to advance understanding, thereby changing beliefs and attitudes. Unfortunately, this did not happen, Arabs are still seen as "the enemy", an image that was easy for television to create based on years of similar portrayals. But we must not discount the importance of The New York Times. For those who read the editorials and feature articles, the Times opened up the Arab world and dealt with the misunderstandings in a relatively objective fashion. A word of caution here about the writings of A.M. Rosenthal. His

apparent hard-line political agenda may be sufficient to arouse racism and feelings of hatred for the Arabs, which tarnishes otherwise balanced coverage. Nonetheless, we should consider the Times' reporting as a vital component in the quest for reduction of stereotypes in the media. When this happens, the public will be able to see people for what they really are, and treat not only the Arabs, but all other minorities as well, with respect and dignity.



APPENDIX A: TABLE OF EDITORIALS AND FEATURE ARTICLES

<u>DATE</u>	<u>TITLE</u>	<u>AUTHOR</u>
Aug. 5	Isolate Iraq	Editorial
Aug. 19	From Mirage to War	A.M. Rosenthal
Aug. 23	The Goals of War	A.M. Rosenthal
Aug. 23	A Father's Joy	E. Schmitt
Aug. 26	On My Mind	A.M. Rosenthal
Sept. 2	Hanging Tough Won't be the Only Test	T. Friedman
Sept. 2	Gulf Oil a Rip-off	Tonelson & Hurd
Sept. 2	Arab Noose on Oil Consumers is Even Tighter	P. Passell
Sept. 13	Gulf Crisis Merits Our Attention	Carr & Chance
Oct. 2	On My Mind	A.M. Rosenthal
Oct. 7	Call For Holy War Reveals Fissures in Islamic World	P. Steinfels
Oct. 9	The Arab Nightmare	A.M. Rosenthal
Oct. 11	Israel's Second Blunder	Editorial
Oct. 14	PLO Will Lose, Even if Iraq Wins	Y. Ibrahim
Oct. 23	War Now, or War Later	D. Pipes
Oct. 23	The New World Order	A.M. Rosenthal
Oct. 25	A Freed British Hostage Tells of Sadistic Guards	S. Rule
Oct. 28	With Friends Like Syria...	R. Ehrenfeld

Oct. 30	Put War to a Vote	G. Stern
Nov. 4	To Manipulate the World, Mystify It	J. Burns
Nov. 6	The Iraqi Nightmare	A.M. Rosenthal
Nov. 11	Impatiently, Arabs Await New Order in the Gulf	Y. Ibrahim
Nov. 13	Shadow of Terror, Hope for Peace	B. Avishai
Nov. 13	On My Mind	A.M. Rosenthal
Nov. 18	The Gulf isn't the Only Crisis	Sen. Sam Nunn
Nov. 20	Five Missing Words in the Arab Middle East	A.M. Rosenthal
Nov. 25	Assad of Syria, the Smoother of Two Evils	J. Kifner
Nov. 27	Assad and Bush	A.M. Rosenthal
Dec. 4	An Iraqi Hostage on the Way it Was	T. Ewald
Dec. 9	A Middle East Peace Parley is Inevitable	E. Bronfman
Dec. 11	Freeing the Hostages	A.M. Rosenthal
Dec. 20	Squelch Iraq's Nuclear Ambition	A. Lewis
Jan. 6	Hussein's Handy Home Survival Guide	E. Sciolino
Jan. 11	Iraq's Untenable Argument	Editorial
Jan. 11	A Tragic Convergence	E. Said
Jan. 13	Iraq's Empty Threat against Israel	Editorial

## APPENDIX B: The Middle East



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